

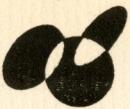
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DECEMBER
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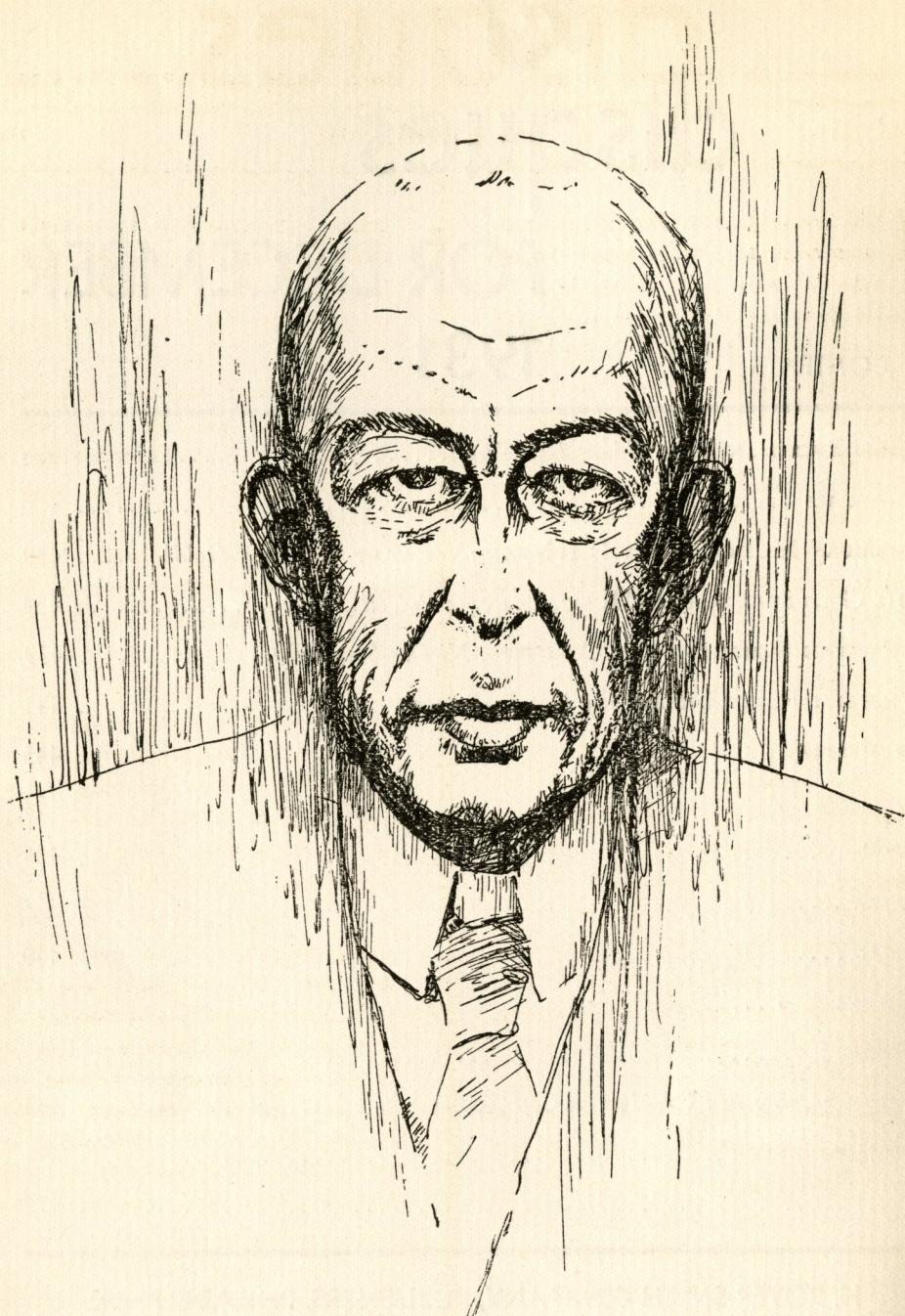
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FOR DECEMBER 1931

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VOL. II

DECEMBER, 1931

No. 10

THE long-playing records, already discussed at considerable length in these columns, have at last been released throughout the country, and so have the new machines designed to play them. They can now be heard under the proper conditions, and in consequence it is possible to form a definite opinion of their merits and demerits by comparing them with the standard records. Such a comparison, it must be admitted at the outset, is not always flattering to the program transcriptions. In many cases, the standard records, so far as the quality of reproduction is concerned, are noticeably superior. They have, in some instances, a much wider range of volume, infinitely more power, a clearer, richer, better-rounded tone—in short, save for the fact that they play for only three or four minutes at a time (a shortcoming that becomes increasingly irksome after hearing the long-playing records), they provide far more realistic and faithful duplications of the original performances. But it is gratifying and immensely encouraging to report that this by no means holds true in every case. Some of the long-playing records are amazingly successful, and are quite as good as the standard records from which they were copied. The Haydn *Clock Sym-*

phony

, for example, apparently loses little or nothing in its new long-playing form. The recording, as in the original set, is a beautiful piece of work, clear, full and always plausibly balanced and proportioned, so that Toscanini's superb interpretation emerges from the loudspeaker very much the same as it would, under different circumstances, emerge from the concert hall platform. Similarly, the record of Rachmaninoff playing Chopin's Sonata in B Flat Minor, Op. 35, is a fine achievement. Originally it occupied seven sides of four 10-inch discs; now, in long-playing form, it covers the two sides of a single 12-inch record, thus reducing the number of trips from the arm chair to the machine from seven to one. The piano tone, moreover, is as fine as it is in the standard set. A thorough comparison reveals no noticeable differences. The 10-inch long-playing record of Coates' performances of the Journey to the Rhine and the Death Music from *Götterdämmerung*, too, is as good as the standard records—neither of which, incidentally, is up to the level of present day recording. The Boston Symphony Orchestra's performance of the *Petrouchka* Suite is another good long-playing record. Here the recording is really excellent, and in fact is even a little better than that in the standard discs.

On the other hand, such records as the *Cavalleria Rusticana* set, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra record of Dvorák's *Carneval* Overture, his Slavonic Dance in G Minor and the Suk *Fairy Tales*—these records, it seems to us, are not nearly so satisfactory as the standard ones. The effect of the long-playing versions of these discs is somewhat similar to that obtained from a standard record when a very soft tone needle is used. The recording is conspicuously lacking in color, brilliancy and character; it is thin, flabby, faded and lustreless; the music is all there, but it is pale and weak and lacks the life of the original. There is always an unmistakable feeling of emptiness, dullness and artificiality. Indeed, despite the great advantage these records have in their long-playing feature, we would prefer to put up with the nuisance of frequent record-changing and listen to the standard discs. . . . That, of course, is only one opinion. We would appreciate hearing what our readers think of the long-playing records, and space will be found in the Correspondence Column for representative letters. Some of the program transcriptions have already been reviewed in *Disques*. As was pointed out in the reviews at the time, though, they were heard under extremely trying circumstances. Some that were not reviewed last month are considered elsewhere in this issue; they were heard, of course, on the proper machines.



If the long-playing records do not now seem quite the perfect things they at first blush appeared to be, that is surely not sufficient cause for undue lamentation and complaint. They still represent a magnificent step forward, and, what is more to the point, they give abundant promise of later—perhaps very soon—developing into something genuinely extraordinary. If now, at the very first stage of the long-playing process, some of the records can be made to sound as well as the standard discs, it is certainly not inconceivable that before long they will all be quite as good as the records to which we have become accustomed; perhaps, in fact, they can be so improved as to reach an even higher state of perfection than that with which we are now familiar. Not many inventions come into the world in perfect form. Electrical recording, to cite but one of many examples related to the phonograph, was at first very coarse and crude compared to present day standards. Each year has seen new improvements and refinements. The long-playing records are infinitely better than the very first examples of electrical recording. Though they have not yet reached a state which can plausibly be called perfect, they are nonetheless remarkable. As was mentioned above, some of them are every bit as good as the original records. Add to that the fact that they give you music in ten- and fifteen-minute periods instead of, as has formerly been the case, three- and four-minute snatches, and you have an improvement the value and convenience of which are immediately obvious. No doubt further improvements in the matter of reproduction will be made in a few months, and then the long-playing records will deserve all the encomiums they have already—perhaps prematurely—received.



Several months ago, when the long-playing record was first announced, the RCA Victor Company stated that an inexpensive device, converting an old type motor into a two-speed motor, would be made available for the convenience of owners of

electrical machines. This device, it is reported, has since been found to be impracticable, and so has quite properly been abandoned. This is unfortunate—unfortunate, that is, in that it will mean that for a while fewer collectors will be in a position to enjoy the benefits that the long-playing process provides. In place of the device, however, we understand that a new motor will be available for those who already own electrical machines and want to play the program transcriptions on them. This motor will operate at either speed, $33\frac{1}{3}$ or 78 r. p.m., so that both kinds of records can be played. It will, of course, be more expensive than the device which has been abandoned, and in these times many people will not care to scrap a motor that, whatever its other limitations, nonetheless operates perfectly at the speed necessary for playing the standard records. It should be pointed out, however, that the long-playing discs are considerably less expensive than the standard records; in many cases, indeed, they cost only half as much. Therefore, the collector can still buy just as much recorded music as he has been accustomed to buying and at about one-half the former cost. The savings will in a few months be enough to pay for the new motor. That, of course, is not an ideal arrangement, nor one to be accepted with much enthusiasm, but it at any rate provides a scrap of comfort and somewhat eases the situation.



The Hugo Wolf Society, announced in last month's *Disques*, is not making very brilliant progress, according to Compton Mackenzie's editorial in the current *Gramophone*. This is extremely discouraging, and Mr. Mackenzie is amply justified in observing somewhat bitterly that "if lovers of the gramophone never intend to venture beyond the familiar ground on which they now amuse themselves, this means inevitably that the gramophone will return to the state of a mechanical toy from which we had, perhaps rashly, supposed it had been promoted." Moreover, if the Hugo Wolf Society fails to receive adequate support, it is obvious that H.M.V., which is sponsoring the project, will not be encouraged to form societies

(Continued on page 438)

SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word IMPORTED appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, CH-Christschall, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotipia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

American Music—What Is It?—and What of It?

By ISAAC GOLDBERG

When that big bow-wow, Samuel Johnson, defined patriotism as the last refuge of a scoundrel, he erred on the side of bluntness. It is only the patriots at the top who are likely to be the scoundrels,—the men who plan the wars, or shape the policies that soon or late make war inevitable. The patriot who does the actual fighting is not a scoundrel. Often, it is the nobler part of his nature that has been appealed to, and, although the ease with which he is deceived into fighting does scant credit to his brains, his heart, nevertheless, is in the right place. When it comes to patriotism in the arts we are confronted by a situation that calls for distinctions and appreciations far more subtle. Art, like nationality, has its chauvinism and its jingoes. The chauvinism and jingoism of art, indeed, are most likely to appear as a more or less virulent form of nationalism. And patriotism becomes, not the last refuge of scoundrels, but the first refuge of mediocrities.

We have been hearing much, and we are going to hear more, about American music. It is, on the whole, a rather confused much. Just what do its proponents and exponents have in mind? Do they mean music written by Americans? And just who are to be the Americans? That last question sounds ridiculous, I know, but you are likely to change your mind about it after you have read, as I have just read, Professor Daniel Gregory Mason's new book, "Tune In, America," in which he attempts to prescribe for our coming musical independence. I am not sure, indeed, that Professor Mason knows what an American is; but we shall hear more of him presently. Do they mean music characterized by a certain something that is of necessity absent from music written anywhere else in the world? Do they include, in this designation, music written by Canadians, by Central Americans, by South Americans? (Paul Rosenfeld, considering American music, finds room for Americans of Spanish and Portuguese origin.) If it is a puzzle to discover just who are to be the Americans, it is equally puzzling to discover just what it is that we shall agree to call American.

Music, in our less sophisticated days, used to be called the universal language. Words require translation; tones? Tones, it began to appear, required translation, too. Music, too, must have a local habitation and a name. We acquire our musical language as we acquire our spoken speech. The European must make a highly conscious effort to understand Chinese or Hindu music. Nay, he must make an effort, almost as highly conscious, to understand the music of the pre-Bachian period in Europe. He thinks, today, that he understands jazz, but too often his practice of it betrays him. Music, then, is not a universal language. It is less restricted, however, than speech because it is by nature more emotional, and therefore cuts deeper into the common substratum of our living. By the universality of music, then, we are not to understand a superficial cosmopolitanism. The magic of artistic creation achieves what we call universality—there is really no such thing—by being vitally true to the here, the now, the concrete, the particular.

So that it would be futile to deny that in all art there is a valid nationalism, and that, by the same token, there is evolving an American music.

At this point, however, we must distinguish between nationalism in art and

nationalism in the economic life. Nationalism in economics is a stage that has begun to decline; it has served its historic purpose; it belongs to the epoch of wasteful competition. For all the high talk of reciprocal understanding among the nations, there is, at the very root of the national idea, the combination of fear and hostility. Nations unto nations are enemies. Necessity, and not the far-seeing idealism of a noble few, has thrust us on to the path of virtual internationalism. It is a natural evolution. As life progresses our loyalties widen. In our growth from childhood to man's estate, by some sort of psychogenetic law that matches the law of biogenesis, we go through the history of the race. Our first allegiance is to the narrow circle of the family,—a beautiful loyalty that may—and often does—degenerate into an armor of selfishness. We then achieve patriotism of the clan, of the city, of the state, of the country. Each of these loyalties has its beauty that degenerates too easily into ugliness. Already we have started upon the road to internationality; nor should it be necessary to surrender the nation in order to achieve the internation, any more than one dissolves the family in order to achieve the nation.

In art, on the other hand, there may be rivalries and mean, irrelevant competitiveness, but there is not, at the root of the function, the necessity of hostility to the art of all other nations. Nations may grow wealthy and powerful at the cost of other nations; what enriches the art of one country, however, enriches the art of all. Nationality, as developed under capitalism, separates the peoples of the earth into hostile groups; art serves to unite them.

II

It is not surprising if critics, discussing the need and the formation of a national art, become confused and carry over into their discussion the emotions and the attitudes characteristic of economic rivalry. The accidents and the necessities of life fill us, often unconsciously, as full of prejudices as a pomegranate with seeds.

Let me revert to Professor Daniel Gregory Mason and his new book on American music; for Mason, in my opinion, is guilty of some sorry confusions and prejudices. This state is fairly symbolized in the very title of his book: "Tune In, America." It appears that Mason is very dubious about the radio; he brings some harsh accusations of sensationalism against it. Yet he does not hesitate to borrow a sensational title from its vocabulary,—a title, by the way, that is out of tune with the generally academic style—perhaps he would call it Anglo-Saxon reticence—that characterizes the book itself.

Just what Mason considers to be American music I can't say; it would be easier for me if he had been more frank. It is half understandable when he rules out Bloch and Loeffler, though there have been Anglo-Saxons who resented this high-handedness on his part. A man like Aaron Copland, though he was born in New York, Mason airily dismisses as "a cosmopolitan Jew." Mr. Mason, in fact, does not like the Jewish influence in American music, and therefore it becomes unAmerican. ". . . The particular type of foreign prestige to which we have most completely capitulated," he writes, "is precisely that Jewish type which, if not exactly based on the 'falsehood of extremes,' at least tolerates, perhaps even enjoys, extremes, as a soberer music cannot. The Jew and the Yankee stand, in human temperament, at polar points; where one thrives, the other is bound to languish. And our whole contemporary attitude toward instrumental music, espe-

cially in New York, is dominated by Jewish tastes and standards, with their Oriental extravagance, their sensuous brilliancy and intellectual facility and superficiality, their general tendency to exaggeration and disproportion." Mason then quotes himself, from an article ten years old, as to the "speciousness, the superficial charm and persuasiveness of Hebrew art, its violently juxtaposed extremes of passion, its poignant eroticism and pessimism"

As clearly as I can make out, Mason identifies Americanism with Yankeeism, in which reposes "the poignant beauty of Anglo-Saxon sobriety and restraint." Let us not be as narrow as he, and deny that beauty. Our Puritans, our Yankees, were nourished upon a rather stern Hebrew-Christian ethics; they seem to have found in the Hebrews something more than "Oriental abandonment to excess." America—even restricting that term to the United States—is a vast region; many strains have come together to build the nation. Just why one of those strains should be singled out to represent the whole I cannot say. Mason suffers, too, from the academic affection for labels and absolutes; to him, all Russians are gloomy Tschaikowskys and Dostoevskys, and all Jews, hysterical Blochs. Now, art has no use for absolutes; it flourishes in individuals. There are happy Russians, there are reticent Jews, there are passion-ridden Yankees. (Did Mason ever see a performance of O'Neill's "Desire Under The Elms"? Or, God save us, has he yet sat before "Mourning Becomes Electra," in which O'Neill plants the house of Atreus in the rocky soil of New England? But perhaps these plays are perverted views by an Irishman writing under Russo-Scandinavian influence?)

Mason fears undue European influences. Yet the very conception of nationalism, as he propounds it, may be a prejudice carried over from the homogeneous nations of Europe. For a New World, new music; very well. But we are not a nation in the sense that the countries of the old world are nations; from the first, it would seem, historic destiny had written us down as the experimental internation.

What was the motto that Mason chose, from Thoreau, for his Festival Overture, *Chanticleer?* "*I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.*" This is not precisely reticence. And if Mason's music had bragged as lustily as Thoreau wrote, it would have been more exciting matter, even if there is nothing identifiably American about it.

III

Music is a thing of many moods; it can, in a single composition such as the symphony, absorb brilliance, passion, reticence, humor, gloom, exultation, despair. We each write out of a multiplicity of influences,—racial, national, and, not least, personal. What matters in the long run is not the racial or national identification; art, even if it builds in part upon these elements, transcends them. At first blush there seems to be no more English a composer than the Anglo-Irish Sullivan. Yet, if you think he is only English, take down the scores of the middle Verdi and see how much Sullivan owes to that Italian, not to speak of Sullivan's training among the Germans. Musically, Sir Arthur had temptations to belong to other nations; this strengthened, not weakened, him.

There is a side remark, however, in Mason's book that blows up his case.

"Elgar," he says, "is English temperamentally (and of course, unconsciously)." That "of course" is of paramount importance. The racial and national heritages enter art most validly when they operate least consciously. Let American composers make music as composers rather than as Americans, and above all, let them forget the ill-concealed ill nature of such mentors as Professor Mason. Theories do not make music,—not even Wagnerian theories. When Mason, listening to Elgar, visions the English countryside, he is simply playing with his own associations. The composer's conscious inspiration has a psychological interest, but it hardly affects the æsthetic qualities of his work. Mr. Carpenter may call his piece *Sky-scrapers*; it would not alter the musical content if he called it *Mudscow* or *Instrumental Combinations in Various Keys*.

Music, music is what we ask for; not labels; not politics; not prides and prejudices; not programs.

Let me now turn to another professor from Columbia,—one who resigned from his chair in 1911. His name is Joel Elias Spingarn, and his withdrawal did him honor. He has not written on music, yet one little essay of his is of more importance to the essential problems of American art, music included, than a few shelves of books that I could list. If you are minded to be a critic, read and re-read his "Creative Criticism" (a new edition, with other essays, has just appeared). Spingarn, in this country, has championed that conception of art which abandons all superficial talk about labels, genres, and such, and concentrates upon the concrete work, seeking, for fullest appreciation, to establish between creator and appreciator a vitalizing identity. It is not a point to be clarified in two lines. That same attitude brought to bear upon American music, or upon the music of any other nation, would show us how unessential are prejudices about Yankees, Jews, Middle-Westerners and Southerners.

Let us have, by all means, what Mason thinks is Yankee music. Why, in so vast a country as this, should such music be incompatible with what he thinks is Jewish music, or Mediterranean music? These do not operate toward reciprocal exclusion. "In my father's house are many mansions." There is no single style that is alone entitled to be called American.

Bloch and Loeffler have written excellent music . . . So, in his earlier days, has Copland . . . So has Gershwin (but tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon; for Mason frowns severely upon jazz, despite its undoubted, if mixed, Americanism) . . . So have a number of men whom Mason grudgingly and ungenerously mentions . . . Is there not room among us for many excellencies? Let music be good. The labels take care of themselves; or, rather, history takes care of them by scrapping them. If we are to produce great composers in this country, let us think in terms of music, not nationality. For those elements that seem to concern Mason most will take care of themselves, "of course, unconsciously."



The Gold Standard in Music

By LAURENCE POWELL

Does Schönberg's *Suite für Klavier*, Op. 25, sound any better than an infant tinkling at the keys? After a performance of this Suite I have many times heard something to this effect: "Why my daughter can improvise better music than that in her second year." Such remarks have come from novices, veteran "music lovers" and professional musicians. I have even heard this sort of thing said of the sweetly poetic romanticism of Delius, except that his music was likened to "cats on the roof" and to pursue the hare still further, I have heard it said that Bach (*in toto*) sounds like a boy pounding the piano keys.

But to return to Schönberg. By far the greater majority of musicians see this similarity between him and the infant, except perhaps a few remarkable and mystifying people who deplore the noise my two-year old daughter makes and yet rave over Schönberg. There is something queer somewhere: after a lifetime devoted, undoubtedly in all sincerity, to the pursuit of the art of music, Schönberg in his fifties writes music that to the great majority of his contemporaries sounds no better than the completely untutored efforts of a two-year old infant! Or is it perhaps that the race is evolving so rapidly that twentieth century children are born with all that Schönberg has had to acquire by the sweat of his brow? Perhaps it is due to the efforts in public school music? I doubt both reasons, particularly the latter. Of course there must somewhere be a difference between Schönberg's efforts and those of an infant, but it is hard to discover it. Perhaps the clue to the situation lies in the fact that even Bach to some sounds no better than an infant. It may depend on a given person's musical background: If you know something about counterpoint you probably see more day-light in Bach: and if you can appreciate *Tristan*, you probably get a kick out of Delius. But no matter how much the average musician knows, or how big his experience, he almost invariably jibes at Schönberg. Perhaps the next generation but one will understand him and be able to hear what now is not hearable—the musicality of his works.

II

I spoke a minute ago of musical background: this is a peculiar thing because besides opening a pair of ears to the joys of the more advanced music it also closes them to the joys of many a great masterpiece of the past. There are many musicians who would rather have a tooth pulled than listen to Bellini: some who cannot stomach a Chopin nocturne any longer: certain works of Beethoven are prone to bring on an attack of colic: Saint-Saëns and Massenet are avoided like the plague. Those having a small background are wrought into a state bordering upon ecstasy by these works, and they are likely to look down upon the musician for despising them, at the same time priding themselves upon their superior culture. Are not these masterpieces the stock-in-trade of the musical appreciation lecturer? Then they must indeed be the acme of artistic achievement.

From the above we might deduce that Bellini, certain works of Chopin and Beethoven, the whole output of Saint-Saëns and Massenet are in the lower reaches of the cultural scale, while Schönberg is at the top of it, at such a dizzy height

that only very few sincere people have ever got there. Well, what about Oriental music? I refer to the Japanese variety in particular. Where in the cultural scale is this? There are several educational records of genuine Japanese music and I notice whole albums mentioned in the Encyclopedia of the World's Best Recorded Music. I have by me an old acoustical recording of a Japanese song, Victor 50147: I am in the dark as to the title because the screed is in Japanese hieroglyphics. The accompaniment reminds one of an asthmatic frog croaking his voice back to life after months of hibernation, while the vocal part sounds like a consumptive octogenarian fish-monger peddling his wares in the fog of Whitechapel and whose voice betrays his nearness to tears because of the heedlessness of passers-by. Then the Chinese Mandarin Song, Victor 48094 has an accompaniment strongly reminiscent of the sounds emanating from the labors of a powerful farmer putting up a wire fence. The vocal part is indescribable, but I should imagine that if a man were to sing while in an apoplectic fit his voice might assume a hideous falsetto howl akin to this Chinese vocalist. There are, however, moments in the Chinese piece that appear to be sane, moments where a definite rhythmical pattern is apparent and some evidence of tonality. In order to produce that excruciating howl, the Chinaman probably paid a vocal instructor quite a sum, and in order to attain that hideous falsetto he probably devoted as much time as did Schönberg to the production of his almost equally incomprehensible music. And yet to our Western ears most Oriental music is ludicrous: we hold our sides and laugh at the music of one of the oldest civilizations in the world. But as many millions of people regard it as fine music as those who regard Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as fine music. Where, I ask, in the cultural scale does this Japanese and Chinese music belong? The unmusical do not appreciate it, so it cannot be at the lower end: It must be somewhere in the upper reaches. It is not the remotest bit like a two-year-old's efforts and in this it might possibly score higher than even Schönberg—it is as far removed from a two-year-old's musical efforts as are nocturnal feline yawlings: in fact, it more closely resembles a two-month old baby's demonstrations with voice and rattle. Pursuing the matter logically, I would argue that if Schönberg sounds like a two-year old and is admittedly at the high end of the cultural scale, then since Oriental music more closely resembles a still younger infant, it must then be at the very summit of the cultural scale. I do hope the music of Heaven is not based upon the Chinese: if Heaven is the sum of all high aspiration, so high that it is unimaginable by man, perhaps Heavenly music will be still higher than Chinese. My thoughts are getting dangerous, for I shall be upsetting the moral order before long and starting a cult for the avoidance of Heaven.

But since most of us have such a job getting up as far as Schönberg, it is almost hopeless to think of our ever reaching the Parnassian heights of Chinese vocalise. If you ever do reach these heights, you will be in a fair way to enjoy nocturnes from the feline species: your soul will be lifted up by the neighbor's cat and you will turn off the radio, for you will no longer have an appetite for Toscanini conducting Haydn; it will be sentimental twaddle as compared to the cat-fight. In fact, you will trade your radio for a round hundred of cats, Siamese, Persian and common. A new instrument will have to be invented something along these lines. An eight-foot board of nicely figured wood will have running its length two broad bands of shining copper: there will be a dozen pairs of straps along these cop-

per strips: when music is desired twelve cats are strapped to the board so that each comes in direct contact with both copper strips and then a reasonable voltage of current is turned on and the concert begins.

III

Since millions enjoy Chinese music and since in the same era other millions can get nothing out of it and enjoy Beethoven's Fifth, and since many deplore Bellini and Massenet while others rave over them, one can only infer that there is no such thing as a gold standard in music. There are no fundamental values in music, and it is impossible to say with fundamental truth what is a good piece of music and what is not. Apart from all the conflicting kinds of music and apart from the fact that one person likes Bellini and another hates him, there is always another factor in the case. Any one person varies according to mood and health within as small a time as a week to such an extent that on Monday the *Blue Danube* Waltz will be unbearable, while by Saturday the same record is heard with comparative enjoyment. Bruno Walter remarked anent the waltz *Tales from the Vienna Woods*: "Yes, if you understand these waltzes they break your heart." What he really meant was, "Yes, if you are in the right mood, these waltzes bring tears to your eyes," because it is pretty certain that there are occasions when Bruno Walter could not stand a Strauss waltz.

There is still another factor to be considered when we realize that no given piece of music sounds the same to one person as to another. When a symphony is played to one thousand people, it is really one thousand symphonies being played at once. Of course there are various types of listeners for whom the symphony will sound more or less the same depths or shallows: there will be the type that envisages sweet little birdies flitting across the sunset landscape, or violent storms, cataracts, volcanic explosions, battles, revolutions or anything sufficiently furious to fit the music: there will be the type that believes in absolute beauty of sound: and there will be the type that just hears the sensuous noise or uproar of any orchestra playing any piece. But taking it by and large, every person will hear the work differently according to his background, general experience, temperament and so forth. Frances Boardman, in an article in the *Commonweal* under date of August 12, 1931, says: "For me, Tschaikowsky's Nutcracker Suite is infinitely sadder than the impressively staged sorrows of the *Pathétique*."

In view of the lack of a definite standard of values in music, what is the use of musical criticism? Ernest Newman has been for some time advocating the elimination of all personal reaction from criticism. This would be a very commendable thing, but how can it ever attain realization? It is as much a Utopian ideal as socialism. Newman wants critics to probe into the composer's mind, and analysing the psychological workings of it lay bare the innate meaning of the music right from its genesis, and thus talk about it as it really is. But this would entail not only analysing the composer's mind, but analysing it at the specific time of the composition of the piece under consideration. Composers would have to be psychologists themselves and keep exhaustive records of the twists and turns of their own mental processes in order for this to be entirely possible. Critics could then resort to these auto-analytical documents and perhaps lay bare some fundamental facts about the music. But of what worth would this sort of criti-

cism be in the long run? Only a few would understand it; and since a given composer is subject, in his musical reactions, to the same laws as the rest of the race, this kind of criticism would be incomprehensible to him when, his mind having moved on from the mood it was in at the time of composition, he himself would hear his own work with different ears.

There being no such thing as absolute beauty in music, the beauty being crystallized in the ear of the hearer according to background, experience and temperament, there can be little else in musical criticism but the recounting of personal reactions, and deductions as to technical details from those personal reactions. Though this may not be of much use to the musician, it has considerable value for the layman, because he relies on a connoisseur to give him some idea as to what he ought to hear of new music, and he enjoys the discovery that his reactions tallied with those of a certain famous critic. Within limits, discrimination can be developed by regular reading of good criticism.

There are mob evaluations of music. I mean that the Western mob or civilization values music by certain standards while Eastern civilization values it by other totally different standards. Of ponderable significance is the recent cult of Western symphonic music in Japan: evidently Western music is going to prove itself more world-wide in appeal than Oriental. True that Debussy and one or two other Occidentals have shown interest in Oriental music and have been to a certain extent influenced by it, but not even the most advanced Occidental has incorporated into his technique such idioms as are to be heard on the discs cited above. All that Westerners do is to extract from Oriental music those features that resemble Western music and yet are sufficiently different to smack of the exotic. There is a clear limit.

IV

To return once more to the engrossing problem of Schönberg. The failure on the part of the greater majority to get anything out of his music is probably due more than anything else to inhibition. He and his music are distinctly outside the aura of mob evaluation, just as is Japanese music outside the pale of Western mob appreciation. He is a super-man who can go directly contrary to normalcy and will have to wait for wider recognition till normalcy makes a change. When that change comes, the logic of his work will stand out in contradistinction to the chaos of a two-year-old's performance, just as the acquiring of the knowledge of Choctaw gives it meaning while before it sounded like the gabbling of an infant. Normalcy changes exceedingly rapidly in music, so rapidly that it is depressing because musical joys fade or get drowned in the onward rush. What was a piquing discord to one generation appears as a feeble concord to the next, Monteverde in 1620 being regarded as ultra-modern for using a chord which is now relegated to hymn-books. What appeared to be a bracing harmonic structure to the first hearers of Strauss, in fact bafflingly bracing, now wears pretty thin. Works that to our grandfathers appeared fit for immortality are now not considered worthy a hearing so weak are they. The gods of yesterday provide the circus music of today.

It sometimes seems that music is the most ephemeral of the arts, and these thoughts are only aggravated by the realization that there is no rock of universality upon which it may stand, relying as it does, more than any other art, on mob

psychology. In fact so quickly does this psychology change that in order to make any appeal to the next generation a man's music almost has to be incomprehensible to the majority of his contemporaries. Though the present generation cannot discover much musicality in Schönberg, the next will and the one after that will find him flat and insipid. In fact the next generation to Schönberg is already at work: a well-known pianist told me that a young Berlin pupil of his remarked that Schönberg's piano music is as sentimental as Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* are. A juvenile will sometimes ape a grown-up, and a grown-up would be open to suspicion of insincerity in this remark: but even insincerity has its uses, because an advanced composer often lives by the sale of his music to charlatans who pose as being up-to-date, where he would starve to death by the sales to the few who really do understand. When a juvenile pianist tells me that Chinese music is as sweet as Mendelssohn I shall, as I have hinted, put all my energies into becoming a thorough degenerate in the fear that Heaven's music may be *à la chinois*.

(Continued from page 429)

for other composers. And the advantages of forming societies for other composers, with the sole purpose of issuing records of their works, are abundantly evident. Indeed, this is a matter that should receive increasing attention from now on, and the Hugo Wolf Society affords an excellent opportunity to collectors to prove that they really do want good music other than the kind that has become somewhat worn through too frequent performance. Considering the numerous complaints that the record supplements tend too much toward the hackneyed and excessively familiar, it seems almost incredible that 500 subscribers haven't yet been found to back the venture. Where now are those collectors whose letters, indignantly demanding to know why this or that masterpiece hasn't been recorded, so often look so impressive in the correspondence columns of the various phonograph magazines? Surely, if the Hugo Wolf Society can't find 500 subscribers, no one will hereafter have the right to condemn the recording companies for the contents of their monthly lists. The annual subscription is only 30s., and this sum entitles members to an album of six 12-inch records of Wolf songs, together with the original text of the songs, an English version and notes on the music by Ernest Newman, probably the leading authority on Wolf's music. It is recommended that you send your subscription without delay to the Secretary, Hugo Wolf Society, the Gramophone Company, Limited, 363, Oxford Street, W. 1., London, England. The chances are you will be richly rewarded.



The death last month of Thomas A. Edison has already been widely commented upon. It is not necessary here to indicate the salient part he played in the development of the phonograph, nor do collectors have to be reminded of the extent to which they are indebted to the great inventor. His passing is a matter of profound regret.

A Russian Symphony and Concerto

By NICOLAS SLONIMSKY

Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3*

Rachmaninoff is said to be the poet of the minor tonality, but his key is in reality the harmonic major with a minor subdominant. Out of this major-minor ambivalence, Rachmaninoff builds his most astonishing images. A long continued sequence of drooping harmonies, a measured ascent, a torrential cadence, all the while the everlasting feeling of the minor tonic, the inevitable end and goal . . . Rachmaninoff's sky may be Maxfield Parrish, his vegetation admittedly Boecklin;—not the greatest art, but emotive art needing no translation.

The Third Concerto in D Minor is a reincarnation of Rachmaninoff's unquestionable masterpiece, the Second. It would be edifying to know what inner impulse caused Rachmaninoff to keep so close to the pattern of the Second Concerto in the opening theme, with its alternation of the minor tonic and supertonic, its three-to-one rhythm. The Third Concerto falls short of the fascination of the Second, as the Fourth Concerto falls short of its predecessor. But the Third is as gorgeous in its pianistic coloring, as bold in its detail as the best of Rachmaninoff's piano music. What more poignant than this simple entrance in sonorous octaves?—a direct and effective statement of musical fact. Fancies follow immediately after, and, were it not for the shadow of similar luxuriance of the Second Concerto, these roulades and magnified fiorituras would be unmitigated pianistic rapture . . .

For the formidable Horowitz the Concerto must be of quite especial memory; it was in this Concerto that he appeared before American audiences for the first time . . . Philip Hale records, on the occasion of the performance of this Concerto with the Boston Symphony, that no such cheering and unbounded enthusiasm has rocked a Boston audience within memory . . . And Philip Hale has a long memory.

Horowitz plays with customary brilliance and gusto. But in his "encore" (the tenth side of the series), for which he chooses the Prelude in G Minor (so-called, by American publishers, "Military Prelude"),—he destroys the legend of his infallibility with his own hands. Not only does he hit all sorts of "inconspicuous" notes, partly hidden within the charitable folds of a none-too-perfect disc, but he strikes determinedly wrong basses twice, and, finally, lands on a resounding B instead of the tonic C in the most crucial modulatory junction. This is bad, and one is at a loss to explain the release of this phonographic dud by the company, and Horowitz's own indifference at this.

Albert Coates, who directs the London Symphony in the accompaniment to the Concerto, is a rarity among conductors: he possesses a polyglot musical culture, being born an Englishman, brought up in Russia, having made his early beginnings in Germany . . . He is quite especially endowed for interpretation of Russian music. It is not his fault that the London Symphony is a notoriously imperfect

*CONCERTO No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30. (Rachmaninoff) Vladimir Horowitz (Piano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. Nine sides and PRELUDE in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5. (Rachmaninoff) One side. Vladimir Horowitz (Piano). Five 12-inch discs (V-DB1486 to V-DB1490) in album. \$12.50.

instrument; that British recording system leaves much to be desired. One gathers the impression that the microphones were situated close to the first violins and the treble of the piano, away from the basses. As a result, the orchestra accompaniment is top-heavy, as is the piano; the second violins, when they are not in unison with the first, vanish into nothingness, impairing considerably the harmonic texture. The pizzicati often sound like jazz percussion instruments struck with the brush.

Either the performer or the conductor is responsible for several unrelieving cuts. The practice of making cuts in a gramophone record is always objectionable; a gramophone record is a document, and in purchasing documents one wants to be sure that they are complete,—even if he does not intend to go carefully over the recorded pages . . . This desire is at the root of all collecting, not to mention the fact that the excised musical paragraphs cause annoyance to the earnest amateur who follows the record with the score. And where would the gramophone industry be without the earnest amateur? The phonograph companies should ponder on't.

*Borodin's Symphony No. 2**

Borodin's Second Symphony is one of the most impressive works of the Russian National School. It is graphic, and lends itself to pictorial interpretation. It is easy to imagine the fabulous giants of ancient Russia striding across the steppes, as the mighty unisons of the opening are sounded. It is a different question whether there is need to summon auxiliary images in a music so direct and rich. Borodin's melodic invention is amazing, considering the fact that he, like Mousorgsky, Balakireff, Rimsky-Korsakoff and Cui, wrote in the confined style of Russian Orientalism, with its eternal modulations through the raised fifth into the relative minor key, its broad, Russian-style cantilena. In the realm of orchestration Borodin did not strive after unconventional effects. The use of the English Horn, which so horrified the French academicians in César Franck's Symphony, is in Borodin's case intended for local color. Outside of this relative innovation, Borodin's orchestra is as unaffected as it is effective. When he contrasts two themes,—one broad, the other quick-stepping—in expert counterpoint, it pleases the eye as well as the ear . . . And the rhythmical compactness in the metrical changes of the Finale is exhilarating . . .

Albert Coates in a Russian work with a British orchestra is at the best of his intelligence and power. The statement of the "giant" theme, with the suspended up-beat, is perfect,—but then the orchestra plays in unison. The situation grows less felicitous when clarity, volume and phonographic balance are factors. Was it for better delineation that Coates cued in an extra trumpet to support a failing clarinet? Or was it merely playing safe? The London Symphony cannot afford a working deficit of a hundred thousand dollars, and acquires itself nobly under the circumstances. But obviously it cannot be measured with the measure of American musical plenty. The recording in England is also less expert than in America, France or Germany. But the British productions are of great interest because of

*SYMPHONY NO. 2 in B Minor. (Borodin) Six sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. Three 12-inch discs (V-11163 to V-11165) in album. Victor Set M-113. \$5.

the steady rise of England as the land of notable new music. British conductors as interpreters of Russian music are probably unsurpassed by any other foreigners. And in the person of Albert Coates we have a staunch champion of the native music of his second homeland,—Russia.

Wilhelm Furtwängler

By HERBERT F. PEYSER

Leaving out of consideration the institutional Toscanini and such isolated survivors of an epoch now embosomed in history as Karl Muck and Felix Weingartner, there can be very little question that Wilhelm Furtwängler is the dominant conductorial figure in Europe today. For almost a decade his sway in Germany has been virtually undisputed. In England, in France, in Belgium and elsewhere his star at the moment is mightily in the ascendant. There have been few conductors at any time since conducting became a fine art whose path has been so little beset by dangerous rivals. This is not to say that Furtwängler is proof at all points against rivalry, but simply that Europe has scarcely brought forth the leader fully qualified to match bâtons with him. One does not speak in one and the same breath of Furtwängler and, for instance, Bruno Walter, as one does of Stokowski and Koussevitzky and Mengelberg. One thinks of Bruno Walter (for all his merits) *after* Furtwängler, and not simultaneously, by way of evenly balanced comparisons. If comparisons are in order there is vastly more reason to oppose Furtwängler with a Toscanini than with a Clemens Krauss, an Otto Klemperer, a Fritz Busch or an Erich Kleiber.

The success of Wilhelm Furtwängler is the success of sheer musicality unmixed with lesser considerations. There is hardly another conductor today whose popularity depends so little on personal factors and extra-musical agencies. It is amazing, for that matter, how little "personality" the man diffuses. He is neither good "theatre," a good tailor's model nor an Apollo. In Vienna somebody once wickedly suggested that he looked like a stalk of asparagus. In the heat of directing he can lash himself into frenzies that are neither inviting to the eye nor stimulating to the imagination. He sometimes fell into these excesses of unbeautiful agitation when he was in New York and thereby incurred the reproach of playing to the American gallery. But I have seen him just as spasmodic and convulsive time and again in the Berlin Philharmonie. His closed eyes, contorted features, clenched fists, flexed knees and brandished arms have their origin in something very different from such an impulse as makes Leopold Stokowski, from the elevation of his scoreless podium, violently stab the air in the direction of the oboes, the bassoons, the violas or the celesta to let *you* know that *he* knows that these instruments have an effect or an entrance at this point. It is an old wheeze that a prima donna conductor, placed behind a screen, could not be one-half as successful as he is when functioning in unobstructed view. Yet Furtwängler was most impenetrably screened when he conducted *Tristan* at Bayreuth during the past Summer and never have the greatness and efficacy of his art been more patent than in this concealment.

Furtwängler wears the adulation of his German public lightly. One might even gather at times that he is indifferent to it. Toscanini endures applause in a manner that has something almost waspish, even truculent, about it. Sometimes he takes it like medicine—as an evil to be gotten over with for better or worse in order to engross himself with the least possible delay in the only part of the business that interests him. Furtwängler, for his part, is as likely as not to accept his honors with something that approaches passivity, or in the fashion of an automaton. His mind is elsewhere, his eyes have the far-off, abstracted look of one inwardly searching and beholding. One of the most tragic aspects of Toscanini's case is the way the world has brutally converted the simplicity and the ideality of the man's soul to head-line publicity and immodest *réclame*. Furtwängler has been spared this indignity and fortunately there is little in his nature so aggressive as sooner or later to invite it.

II

The elements which contribute to the greatness of Furtwängler's conducting are not as easily analyzed and isolated as one might expect them to be in the case of an artist whose distinctions are so palpable and preëminent. That his musicianship is colossal and his memory prodigious are facts which, in themselves, do not hit off the most conspicuous features of his art. But one cannot avoid a more or less rigid catalogue of the virtues which contribute to the commanding entity. He has, for instance, an astounding instinct for tempi that are justifiable from the ground up. Not even Toscanini, to my mind, has this intuition of inner and outer pace and measure to such an almost infallible degree. Grieg used to say that when a conductor's tempi were wrong everything else that he did was wrong. Looking back over all the years I have been listening to Furtwängler since 1923 I can scarcely recall a single instance in which I have felt a solitary element of tempo to be awry. Not even Nikisch captured more completely and essentially the tempo which lies at the roots of the First Symphony of Brahms than Furtwängler did on that memorable evening in Carnegie Hall when he made his first bow to an American audience. A more perfect Beethoven Fifth than his in this, as in every other respect, I have never heard. And the stylistic versatility of the conductor is remarkable. Listening to his Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven has filled me time and again with the conviction that he is first and last a classicist in his sympathies and predilections. And yet no uncompromising classicist could have given a performance of Schumann's D Minor Symphony so nobly and authentically romantic as I heard him conduct last year at a concert of the Berlin Philharmonic. Still less could such a one have brought to blossom the second act of *Tristan* as Furtwängler did last July in Bayreuth. And even if one may suspect that his heart is not in the scores of the German modernists he plays them with a conviction which is admirably simulated if not truly felt.

I shall not insist that Furtwängler invariably achieves in a work that myriad perfection of detail which is one of Toscanini's claims to glory; nor yet that the sound of his orchestra is that singing miracle whereby the Italian translates an aggregation of instrumentalists to the likeness of the morning stars in concert. Speaking in a paradox, the sound of the German's orchestra is first and last an orchestral sound. Yet how superfine a molder of orchestras Mr. Furtwängler is

many must have learned this year in Bayreuth. More of a *tour-de-force* in this respect, perhaps, is the Berlin Philharmonic—in itself not an orchestra of extraordinary qualities when compared with our Boston Symphony, our Philadelphia and our New York Philharmonic, but rising now and then under the Furtwängler tutelage and inspiration almost to the equivalent of what the Germans call our "American luxury orchestras."

III

An essay might be written on the extraordinary sensitiveness and the expert contrivance of Furtwängler's dynamic scale alone. He is a past master of what the Germans call "Steigerung"—a word that our "enhancement" and "intensification" render only imperfectly—of the *crescendo* and the tapering dynamic decrease. These qualities make his *Lohengrin* Prelude, his *Tristan* Vorspiel and Liebestod and his *Eroica* funeral march unforgettable experiences. And yet they are never obtained at the expense of line or clarity or the correct adjustments of detail to a carefully elaborated architectural plan.

It was Furtwängler's repeated experience in his earlier days to "succeed" to the positions of important conductors who gave up their posts or died. Thus at twenty-nine he assumed in Darmstadt the operatic leadership relinquished by Artur Bodanzky and four years later he followed Richard Strauss as head of the Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra. From Willem Mengelberg he took over the direction of the Frankfurt Museum Concerts and on Nikisch's death he was inducted into the hallowed Gewandhaus of Leipzig. This last was perhaps his greatest triumph till then, as Gewandhaus patrons and the generality of musicians had been oppressed with a feeling of certainty that no one could worthily fill Nikisch's shoes. The results are history today; and for all of Nikisch's greatness he had never displayed a versatility as considerable in its scope as his successor's.

In the matter of rehearsals Furtwängler departs from the example of a number of his colleagues. He is no believer in an excessive amount of orchestral practice. In this respect he is probably the direct opposite of Willem Mengelberg, whose exigencies of rehearsal have always been unsparing. The admirers of the Dutch master have even made a fetish of this inflexible habit of his. How often during his New York Philharmonic days were we admonished that "if you want to hear Mengelberg at his greatest you must hear him at rehearsal." Others, however, were known to complain that Mr. Mengelberg used to talk his players almost to sleep by dilating on all sorts of irrelevancies. Last February the German periodical *Die Musik* published an article on Furtwängler's rehearsal attitude, in which was stressed the conductor's opinion that the American habit of heaping up rehearsals till they became an end rather than a means was bound to rob the performances of their spontaneity. It was the Furtwängler view that if the bâtonist had fully settled on all the points of an interpretation before beginning the period of orchestral practice, if he had the score thoroughly in his head and a sufficient technical mastery at his fingers' ends, rehearsals could be curtailed and expedited in such fashion that the initiative of the players would not be dulled and the creative and inspirational elements investing the conductor's reading would exert their fullest effect at the performance instead of being dissipated during the practice hours.

No doubt, in the sage words of Roger de Coverley, much can be said on both sides of the question. But whatever his preferences and convictions in such matters Furtwängler is incontestably one of those conductors who, as Walter Abendroth once said of him, "place themselves and their entire personality at the service of a musical work, the most perfect possible execution of which is their sole aim and object."

FURTWÄNGLER RECORDS

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: *Overture*. (Mendelssohn) Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. Three sides and LA FILEUSE. (Mendelssohn) One side. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff. Two 12-inch discs (B-90137 and B-90138). \$1.50 each.

ROSAMUNDE: *Ballet Music in G Major*. (Schubert) One side and SUITE IN D MAJOR: *Air*. (Bach) One side. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. One 12-inch disc (B-90059). \$1.50.

LOHENGRIN: *Prelude*. (Wagner) Two sides. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. One 12-inch disc (PD-95408). \$1.50.

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE: *Prelude and Isolde's Love Death*. (Wagner) Four sides. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. Two 12-inch discs (B-90201 and B-90202). \$1.50 each.

BRANDENBURG CONCERTO No. 3 *in G Major*. (Bach) Three sides and ROSAMUNDE: *Entr'acte No. 2*. (Schubert) One side. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. Two 12-inch discs (B-90161 and B-90162). \$1.50 each.

LA GAZZA LADRA: *Overture*. (Rossini) Two sides. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. One 12-inch disc (B-90188). \$1.50.

TILL EULENSPIEGEL'S MERRY PRANKS. (Richard Strauss) Three sides and HUNGARIAN MARCH. (Berlioz) One side. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. Two 12-inch discs (PD-95410 and PD-95411). \$1.50 each.



ORCHESTRA



ELGAR C-67999D to C-68002D	VARIATIONS ON AN ORIGINAL THEME ("Enigma"), Op. 36. Seven sides and DREAM CHILDREN, Op. 43. One side. Hallé Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Harty. Four 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 165. \$6.
V-D1998 and V-D1999 <small>IMPORTED</small>	NURSERY Suite. Four sides. London Symphony Orchestra con- ducted by Edward Elgar. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

The more important aspects of Elgar's music have been considered in *Disques* by Mr. John F. Porte, whose article on the composer was published in the April, 1931, issue. It is a commonplace, of course, that Elgar in this country is neglected. Over here he is perhaps best known through the *Enigma* Variations (there is no point in bringing up the *Salut d'Amour* aberration again; those who are enchanted by such works don't bother with the composer's name anyway), which can now and then be heard in American concert halls. But the two symphonies, distinguished works of their kind, are seldom played in this country. That the loss to American concert-goers is a considerable one a hearing of the H.M.V. records will afford convincing testimony.

The *Enigma* Variations have already been recorded by H.M.V. under the composer's direction. The set is a satisfactory one, but Victor did not repress it, and so there is plenty of room for this admirable new version by the Hallé Orchestra under Sir Hamilton Harty. The release by the local Columbia Company appears to be the first in the world. It is an event of some importance, for outside of the two *Wand of Youth* Suites which Victor issued several years ago on one of its extra lists, the *Enigma* set is the only important Elgar work thus far put out by an American company.

The composition consists of thirteen variations and a finale, though it is said that Sir Edward Elgar, speaking not altogether seriously, once referred to the finale as the fourteenth variation because of superstitious reasons. Each number, headed by a group of initials, a pseudonym or a row of asterisks, is intended to be Elgar's musical portrait of a friend. The identity of these friends is known only to the composer, but there has been much speculation on the subject, and several conjectures have been accepted as plausible ones. Thus Variation I (C.A.E.), for example, is generally accepted as Elgar's musical description of his wife; Variation IX ("Nimrod") is supposed to represent the late A. E. Jaeger; and Variation XI (G.R.S.) is agreed to be Dr. George Robertson Sinclair, who died in 1917.

But all that is a matter of small importance to most music lovers. The majority of us will be interested in the work simply as music, and as music it is thoroughly delightful. The fourteen numbers contain plenty of variety and contrast, ranging from the tender music of Variation I to the extremely vigorous and energetic



passages of Variation VII. Elgar's orchestration is skilful and always interesting, and the recording brings it out superbly. Note in Variation VII the fine reproduction of the kettledrums and brass and, at the end, of the full orchestra. And the recording is similarly fine throughout the set. It has been a long time since we have heard the Hallé Orchestra in an extended recording, and its return to records will be welcomed by collectors. Performing under its regular conductor, Sir Hamilton Harty, it gives a vivid, clean-cut performance. . . . *Dream Children*, on the odd side of the set, is agreeable music.

Sir Edward Elgar's *Nursery* Suite, dedicated to the Duchess of York and the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose, was written on the occasion of the latter's birth. H.M.V., which has already recorded so many of Elgar's works, including the two symphonies (the composer is said to be at present completing his Third Symphony), exhibited exemplary promptness in putting the Suite on discs. It was recorded, in fact, before it was played in public. In the future, no doubt, we'll see more of this sort of thing, considering the fact that the quantity of good recording material available has been appreciably diminished in the past couple of years and will in all probability grow increasingly more so in the next two or three. From Christopher Stone's column in the *Gramophone*, "Turn Table Talk," we learn that the "Duke and Duchess of York and Mr. Bernard Shaw were present at the Kingsway Hall to watch Sir Edward Elgar conducting, and one of the movements [this, according to the September H.M.V. supplement, was No. 5, *The Waggon Passes*] was encored."

The Suite is in seven movements. These are given the following titles: *Aubade (Awake)*; *The Serious Doll*; *Busy-ness*; *The Sad Doll*; *The Waggon Passes*; *The Merry Doll*; *Dreaming-Envoy (Coda)*. While it is not to be ranked with Elgar's more important works, or even with the *Wand of Youth* Suites, to which some critics have compared it, the *Nursery* Suite contains some charming music, and it abounds with engaging and piquant effects. The *Serious Doll*, with its flute solo deftly played by Gordon Walker, *Busy-ness*, *The Waggon Passes*, and *The Merry Doll* are delightful. The concluding number, *Dreaming*, begins rather drearily, but toward the end it grows more interesting, probably because of a lovely violin cadenza, beautifully played on these records by W. H. Reed, concert-master of the London Symphony Orchestra. The orchestration is fresh and bright, and the tunes have a surprising amount of bounce and vitality. It is likeable music, without any traces of the cheapness and banality that mark some of Elgar's lesser works, such as, for instance, the *Crown of India*, another recent Elgar recording. Under Sir Edward's authoritative hand, the London Symphony always performs with gusto, and its work here is crisp and polished. The recording is unmistakably fine. In the movement called *Busy-ness* the realism with which the fiddles are recorded is noteworthy.

BORODIN
V-11163
to
V-11165

{ SYMPHONY NO. 2 in B Minor. Six sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates.
Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-113. \$5.

Reviewed in the article, "A Russian Symphony and Concerto."

BACH
V-7437

- FUGUE IN G MINOR ("Little" *G Minor* Fugue). Bach—
Arr. Stokowski) One side and
CHORAL PRELUDE: *Christ lag in Todesbanden*. (Bach—
Arr. Stokowski) One side. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted
by Leopold Stokowski. One 12-inch disc. \$2.



The Philadelphia Orchestra has issued a number of Bach records, many of them arrangements of organ works for orchestra; but the arranger's name, though commonly reputed to be Stokowski, was always omitted from the labels. Departing from the usual custom, the label on this record states quite plainly that the arranger was Stokowski. This is, of course, precisely as it should be. After all, we have a right to know who is responsible for the alterations. The Fugue in G Minor is generally referred to by organists as the *Little G Minor Fugue*, to avoid confusing it with the *Great Fugue* in the same key. Composed during Bach's Weimar period, the Fugue is admirably adapted for orchestral treatment. Stokowski's arrangement is a skilful one, and he has succeeded in giving the work plenty of variety and contrast. The conclusion is thrilling. There is beautiful woodwind playing in the beginning of the piece, and the recording of the brass instruments toward the end is genuinely impressive. The recording of the whole work, indeed, is as fine as that in any of the Philadelphia Orchestra's discs and much better than that in many of them. The Choral Prelude, *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, another of Stokowski's arrangements, exhibits the beautiful strings of this orchestra to striking advantage. It is a lovely piece of work. As far as this reviewer can ascertain, incidentally, the arrangement has only once figured on a Philadelphia Orchestra program, and that program was not included in the orchestra's regular series of concerts, but was an extra one for the Musicians' Benefit Fund. Thus the work will be new even to the majority of the Philadelphia Orchestra's audiences. This organization's Bach recordings have been among its salient contributions to the phonographic repertoire; and the above record is easily one of the most felicitous and enjoyable of them all.

HONEGGER
C-G67998D

- PACIFIC, 231: *Symphonic Movement for Orchestra*. Two sides.
Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arthur Honegger.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Honegger's *Pacific, 231* has its admirers, and they will find in the above record a first-rate performance and recording of the work. The composer himself, moreover, wields the bâton,—apparently with great vigor,—so that the reading may be considered thoroughly authoritative. It would help if the label were more informative as to which side should be played first; as it is, the label simply states that the work is in two parts, but which is the first and which the second is left to the hearer's discretion.

FRANCK
B-90207

- REDEMPTION: *Interlude*. Two sides. Lamoureux Orchestra
conducted by Albert Wolff. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

This record was reviewed from the Polydor pressing on page 170 of the June, 1930, issue. It is a fine piece of recording.

**BEETHOVEN**B-90204
to
B-90206{ SYMPHONY NO. 1 in C Major, Op. 21. Six sides. Berlin
Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Hans Pfitzner.
Three 12-inch discs in album. Brunswick Set No. 34. \$4.50.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 7.

The Brunswick catalogue, fast taking on weight these days, now includes late electrical recordings of six of the nine Beethoven symphonies: the First, Second, Third, Fifth, Sixth and Ninth have thus far been repressed from the Polydor records and issued in America. What is more, each one of these sets is satisfactory, and some of them, in fact, are extraordinarily good. This recording of the First, however, does not belong in the latter group. Pfitzner, who accomplished such superlatively charming things with the *Pastoral* (reviewed in these columns a few months back), attempts much the same sort of reading with the First, and the results are not altogether happy.

This comparatively simple early work of Beethoven's, which most authorities seem to agree follows pretty closely upon the style of the symphony as established by Haydn and Mozart, becomes rather dull and tedious when approached as seriously as Pfitzner apparently approaches it. Hearing the records, one continually finds oneself wishing that the conductor would throw aside his dignity for the moment and really let his orchestra go. There is too much dignity, too much restraint, too much solemnity here. In the process, Beethoven becomes smothered and gasps for air. Things are too forced and labored. All this is particularly noticeable in the first two movements, which reveal infinite care in the interpretation but are notably lacking in gusto and spontaneity. In the Menuetto Pfitzner does relax his hold a trifle, and the music flows more freely and joyously. So in the last movement. There is less restraint in the reading, and the music consequently becomes incomparably more agreeable.

The Berlin Philharmonic, somewhat chastened by Pfitzner's frowns, carries out his wishes competently, and the recording throughout is first-rate. Mengelberg's Victor recording—which also lacks the lightness of touch so essential in this work—will probably be preferred by most people, but it should be remembered that his set occupies four 12-inch records, whereas Pfitzner gets the work on three, so that the latter's version is much less expensive. Mengelberg's recording was reviewed on page 508 of the February, 1931, issue of *Disques*. Another recording of the work, Pablo Casals', made with his Barcelona Orchestra, was reviewed in the August, 1930, issue. It also suffers from too heavy treatment, but the recording is satisfactory.

**HUMPER-
DINCK**
V-7436{ HÄNSEL AND GRETEL: *Overture*. Two sides. New York
Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra conducted by Willem Men-
gelberg. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 1101.

This disc was issued several months ago by the Italian branch of Victor, and it was reviewed in the October issue on page 354. It is beautifully recorded and competently performed.

STRAWINSKY	PETROUCHKA <i>Suite</i> . Two sides. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky.	
V-L1001	One 10-inch long-playing disc. \$3.	
RIMSKY-KORSAKOW	LA GRANDE PAQUE RUSSE <i>Overture</i> . (Rimsky-Korsakow)	
	One side and	
TSCHAI-KOWSKY	CAPRICCIO ITALIEN. (Tschaikowsky) One side. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.	
	One 12-inch long-playing disc. \$4.50.	
TSCHAI-KOWSKY	NUTCRACKER <i>Suite</i> . Two sides. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.	
	One 12-inch long-playing disc. \$4.50.	

The *Petrouchka* Suite, in the standard set, occupied five sides of three 12-inch records. Here, in long-playing form, it takes only the two sides of a 10-inch disc. It has been copied from the regular records extremely well, and the advantage of listening to the work with only one interruption is a considerable one. Moreover, the recording here is eminently satisfactory. It is too bad that this version is not, like Albert Coates' excellent H.M.V. recording, complete.

Both *La Grande Paque Russe* and *Capriccio Italien* are well known, and the standard records of the works are among the best recorded of the Philadelphia Orchestra's discs. Each work, in standard form, took the four sides of two 12-inch records; now each can be heard without a break. The recording is almost as good as that in the standard sets.

The *Nutcracker* Suite was one of the earliest of the Philadelphia Orchestra's electrical recordings. When it was first issued, it was a truly amazing set, and even today, in fact, it sounds uncommonly well. The standard set required the six sides of three 12-inch records. In long-playing form the work is put on the two sides of a single 12-inch record, an immense improvement, of course. The recording is faded and muffled.

SCHUBERT	SCHUBERT MELODIES: <i>German Waltzes</i> ; <i>Menuetto in B Minor</i> ; <i>Marche Militaire</i> ; <i>Vienna Waltzes</i> ; <i>Rosamunde-Ballet Music and Entr'acte</i> . Two sides. Victor Salon Orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret.
V-L4510	One 10-inch long-playing disc. \$1.75.
DVORÁK SUK	CARNEVAL <i>Overture</i> . (Dvorák) One side and (a) FAIRY TALES. (Suk) (b) SLAVONIC DANCE NO. 1 <i>in G Minor</i> . (Dvorák) One side. Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock. One 10-inch long-playing disc. \$3.

The Schubert pieces come from the Victor album entitled "An Hour With Schubert." They are delightfully played and make extremely pleasant listening. The recording is not up to the fine standard of the regular records, but it is good, and it is very convenient to listen to the music in this form.



Why Frederick Stock's early electrical recording of Dvorák's *Carneval* Overture should have been selected for a long-playing record is something of a mystery. And when it is remembered that Victor already has in its catalogue a much better recording of the same work by Eugène Goossens and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and, furthermore, has also the privilege of repressing the excellent H.M.V. version recently made by Albert Coates and the London Symphony—when these facts are recalled, the mystery becomes downright insoluble. Both of these recordings are much superior to Stock's. Done some years ago—during the first year of electrical recording, in fact—the reproduction is colorless and rather coarse. These qualities have been transferred to the long-playing disc. In standard form the work took two sides of a 12-inch record; now it is given complete on the one side of a single 10-inch long-playing record. The advantage is obvious. The Suk *Fairy Tales* and the Dvorák Slavonic Dance each occupy one side of a single 12-inch standard record. Here they are grouped together on the reverse side of the *Carneval* Overture. *Fairy Tales* is a lively, colorful piece, and Stock and his men play it with fine spirit. The Dvorák Slavonic Dance is also delightful, and the orchestra plays it zestfully. The recording is good, but it is better in the standard record.

GLAZOUNOW	{	LES RUSES D'AMOUR: <i>Ballabile</i> . One side and
V-C1930 <small>IMPORTED</small>		THE SEASONS: <i>Bacchanale</i> . One side. Royal Opera Orchestra, Covent Garden, conducted by John Barbirolli. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

The movement from the ballet, *Les Ruses d'Amour*, is attractively written and makes good recording material. So, also, does the Bacchanale from *The Seasons*, though it would have been better if some other work of Glazounow's had been selected to fill out the reverse side, since the composer himself directs, for Columbia, an excellent recording of the complete work. Barbirolli gives an energetic performance, and the recording is clean-cut and well-rounded. Another recording of the *Ruses d'Amour* piece is reviewed under Additions to the RCA Victor Catalogue, printed elsewhere in this issue.

MOZART	{	IDOMENEO: <i>Ballet Music</i> . One side and
V-EJ691 <small>IMPORTED</small>		ANDANTE for Flute and Orchestra. One side. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Leo Blech. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

This is an altogether charming record. The music is more than satisfying, and Dr. Blech and his orchestra play it delightfully. Mozart's *Idomeneo* has recently been much before the public eye in Europe because of the productions in Vienna and Munich. For the Vienna production, Richard Strauss prepared a new version of the work, and for the Munich Wolf-Ferrari performed a similar service. The differences between the two versions, however, were said to have been considerable. Neither production was deemed much of a success. But there is excellent music in the work, as the Ballet Music demonstrates. The Andante for Flute is well known; here it receives sympathetic treatment. The recording is a fine example of the recorder's art.

MENDELSSOHN	SYMPHONY NO. 4 in A Major ("Italian"), Op. 90. Seven sides and
V-AW245 to V-AW248	WEDDING MARCH from "Midsummer Night's Dream." One side. La Scala Orchestra conducted by Ettore Panizza.
IMPORTED	Four 12-inch discs in album. \$8.



Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 420.

ZANDONAI	FRANCESCA DA RIMINI: <i>Potpourri</i> . (Zandonai-Tavan)
V-S10288 IMPORTED	Two sides. La Scala Orchestra conducted by Carlo Sabajno. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

The Mendelssohn *Italian* Symphony has only once before been attempted electrically. That attempt was by the Decca Company, and the recording, done by the Orchestra Poulet conducted by Gaston Poulet, arrived in this country early last Summer and was reviewed on page 216 of the July, 1931, issue of *Disques*. It was a miserable affair, poor recording and indifferent playing combining to make an outstandingly bad set. "It will have to suffice," the *Disques* review concluded hopefully, "until some other manufacturer, anxious to give us something that has not already been done half a dozen times, decides to turn loose a first-rate orchestra, conductor and group of recording engineers on the Symphony."

Italian H.M.V., perhaps thinking along the same lines, has done precisely that, and here we have the work competently played and recorded by a first-rate conductor and Italy's finest orchestra. The *Italian* Symphony has not been worked to death in the concert hall, so that good records of the work are genuinely welcome and fill a need which, if not exactly pressing, nonetheless exists. The Symphony is a graceful and imaginative piece of writing, in which untroubled gaiety and charm are nearly always in evidence. The lively Finale, a *Saltarello* (an Italian dance), is said to have been inspired by a carnival Mendelssohn witnessed while in Rome. The Symphony is not an extremely important matter, but there are times when something dainty, sensitively contrived, and pleasingly melodious is wanted, and it is for such moods that the work is recommended. There are no cloudy, befuddled moments in it; everything is fresh and clear and often merry.

La Scala Orchestra, which almost always records exceedingly well, achieves delightful results with the work. Playing under Ettore Panizza, the band tosses it off with ease and spirit, and its touch is appropriately light. The recording is warmly satisfying throughout. On the odd side of the set the Wedding March from the *Midsummer Night's Dream* is nicely played and recorded.

Zandonai's opera, *Francesca da Rimini* (after d'Annunzio), was performed in America on February 18, 1914, when it was given at the Metropolitan Opera House, Mme. Alda and Martinelli appearing as the lovers. The symphonic episode from Zandonai's opera, *Giulietta e Romeo* has also been recorded by the Scala Orchestra, and it was reviewed on page 263 of the September, 1930, issue of *Disques*.

Here, according to the label, we are given a potpourri from *Francesca da Rimini*. It is an enjoyable group of selections from the opera, and the music, though



somewhat pompous and gaudy, rings true. The vivid orchestration is pleasing, and La Scala Orchestra, this time performing under the practiced bâton of Carlo Sabajno, who has led so many complete operas for Victor, gives a glowing performance. The recording is splendidly done.

J. STRAUSS	{	VOICES OF SPRING <i>Waltz</i> . Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Felix Weingartner.
C-50306D		One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

HAYDN	{	TOY SYMPHONY. Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Felix Weingartner. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.
C-50309D		

The *Voices of Spring* is one of the most popular of the Strauss waltzes, and accordingly has not been neglected by the recording companies. Perhaps the best of the previous versions was the Boston Symphony Orchestra's recording, a delightful piece of playing and reproduction. But this one by Weingartner seems to top them all, and indeed is one of the best recordings of a Strauss waltz we have ever heard. For recording purposes the waltz is generally shortened so that it can be put on the one side of a 12-inch record, but here it is given in more complete form and occupies both sides of the disc. Weingartner gives Strauss' joyous melodies just the right twist, and the anonymous orchestra—an uncommonly good one—plays with fine skill. The recording is deep-toned and clear.

The Haydn Symphony has been recorded before, but here again Weingartner seems to have something on the other versions. Frankly a joke, the *Toy Symphony*, with its nursery effects, is not so amusing today, but it makes an excellent record for the children. Recording and playing are crisp and clean-cut.

MASSENET	{	LES ERINNYES: (1) <i>Prélude</i> . (2) <i>Scène religieuse</i> . (3) <i>Entr'acte</i> . (4) <i>Divertissement</i> —(a) <i>Danse Grecque</i> ; (b) <i>La Troyenne regrettant sa patrie</i> ; (c) <i>Final</i> . Six sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Elie Cohen.
C-DFX87 and C-DFX88		Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.
C-DFX92		

IMPORTED

Some of this music was originally written for an opera, *La Coupe du roi Thulé*. But the work was deemed unsuitable for stage production, and so it was never performed. Massenet's labors, however, were not altogether wasted, for he remodelled the best numbers and thriftily transferred some to his next opera, *Le Roi de Lahore*, and others to the incidental music he prepared for Leconte de Lisle's drama, *Les Erinnyses*. The incidental music was not very successful, though it is hard to see why, for in this recording it sounds in no wise inferior to some of his other and more popular works; it is, in fact, abundantly supplied with the elements that once made Massenet so tremendously well-liked in France. Smoothly orchestrated and filled with obvious tunes and effects, it is superficial and commonplace music, pleasant at the first hearing, obnoxious at the next. Finer radio music could scarcely be found. The recording and performance are excellent, and there are good oboe and violoncello solos by M. Gaudard and Maurice Maréchal.

WEILL

PD-24172
and
PD-24173

IMPORTED

KLEINE DREIGROSCHENMUSIK für *Blasorchester*. Four sides. Members of Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. Two 10-inch discs. \$1.25 each.



Kurt Weill will be remembered as the composer of *Lindbergh's Flight*, the cantata for soli, chorus and orchestra which Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra played and broadcast last Spring. Born in 1900, Weill is now one of the best known of the younger composers of Central Europe, and some of his works have achieved considerable popularity. The selections given here are four songs, apparently from Weill's adaption of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. Writing in *Disques* for June, 1931 ("Modern Germany Marks Time"), Mr. Herbert F. Peyer, musical correspondent for Germany of the *New York Times*, said: "Kurt Weill . . . is a name which the Germans pronounce with respect. The reason for this is not to be sought in tendencies or gifts that raise him to so much higher a level than Krenek or Hindemith or Berg or the rest of them, but in the fact that, in company with his librettist Bert Brecht, he appealed beyond the specifically musical public when he wrote the *Dreigroschenoper*—that abominable, jazzified perversion of *The Beggar's Opera*, to which, in reality, John Gay's historic masterpiece contributes no more than a few mispronounced names and the outline of a plot. In a great many respects the *Dreigroschenoper* falls into the category of operetta, and it is the theatregoers rather than the music lovers who have made its fortune. Its 'songs' (in German theatrical parlance modern cabaret and operetta numbers are called by the English word 'songs,' and you cannot make a contemporary German understand that we mean by 'song' the same thing that he means by *Lied*) are published like any popular *Schlager* (hit) of the hour and are in the repertory of the best dance orchestras. Unquestionably Kurt Weill has gained the public ear as Krenek and Hindemith have never managed to do. Yet he and his *Dreigroschenoper* and the humor of Bert Brecht are, I am convinced, entirely local enthusiasms—as restrictedly geographic, so to speak, as the incorrigible affection for an opera like d'Albert's *Tiefland* and the incredible esteem harbored in almost all corners of Germany for a solemn old bore like Hans Pfitzner. Since *Mahagonny* Messrs. Weill and Brecht have made no large scale efforts to consolidate their position. Instead, they have tried to develop in the general musical style of the *Dreigroschenoper* what they call the 'school opera'—small works, intended for presentation by school children. In this attempt they have been lucky enough to start a kind of fad and 'school operas,' or the promise of such, have emanated from several other quarters."

The four numbers rendered here are given the following titles on the Polydor labels: *The Dreadful Crime of Mackie Messer*; *The Ballad of the Comfortable Life*; *Tango Ballad*; *Cannon-Song*. They reveal, of course, the influence of jazz, and, indeed, one wonders whether they wouldn't sound better played by a first-rate jazz orchestra, though the combination here employed—which includes saxophones and a piano—manages now and then to achieve some mildly indecorous effects. Thus played they would probably make tolerably lively fox-trots. There is nothing of special significance about these songs; they are simply fairly interest-



ing tunes, not noticeably superior to the general run of the melodies so popular in the German talkies shown in the little movie theatres of the United States. They make only passable recording material, and should be placed with the selections from Mark Lothar's *Lord Spleen*, Krenek's *Jonny* and Weinberger's *Schwanda*. Of all these works the last-named appears to have the most enduring qualities. Otto Klemperer and his men, attempting a brisk performance, achieve only dullness; the recording apparently misses nothing.



CONCERTO

MOZART

V-DB1491

to

V-DB1493

IMPORTED

CONCERTO IN A MAJOR (K. 488). Six sides. Arthur Rubinstein (Piano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. Three 12-inch discs. \$2.50 each.

This set brings the sum total of Mozart piano concerto recordings to four—not a very large proportion, considering the fact that twenty-five concertos for piano and orchestra are listed in Köchel's catalogue, although the first four have been proved to be adaptions. Last month a moderately good recording of the Concerto in F Major (K. 459), played by Georges Boskoff and the Paris Philharmonic Orchestra, was reviewed in this place, and there a list of the available recordings of Mozart's piano concertos can be found.

The Concerto in A Major is one of the seventeen such compositions Mozart wrote at Vienna. The composer expected to give during Lent of 1786 three subscription concerts, and for these he wrote three new concertos: the one in A Major, another in E Flat (K. 482), and a third in C Minor (K. 491). The A Major is dated March 2, 1786. It is scored for flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns and strings. The orchestration consequently is very light, but it provides an effective support for the piano.

The work is in three movements: Allegro, Andante and Presto. It is lovely music, sunny, graceful, supple, and marvelously delicate in texture. Rubinstein plays it very well, giving one of the most felicitous performances for the phonograph we have yet had from him. He is ably backed up by the London Symphony Orchestra under Barbirolli, whose restrained, well-balanced accompaniment is admirable. The recording is not sensational, but save for side five, where it unaccountably becomes rather coarse, it is satisfying.

RACHMANINOFF

V-DB1486

to

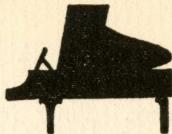
V-DB1490

IMPORTED

CONCERTO NO. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30. Vladimir Horowitz (Piano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. Nine sides and
PRELUDE in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5. One side. Vladimir Horowitz (Piano). Five 12-inch discs in album. \$12.50.

These records are reviewed elsewhere in this issue by Nicolas Slonimsky.

PIANO



BACH
C-68003D
to
C-68006D

TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR PIANO: (a) *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor for Organ.* (Bach-Tausig-Busoni). (b) *Prelude and Fugue in A Minor for Organ.* (Bach-Liszt) (c) *Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor for Organ.* (Bach-Liszt) (d) *Blithe Bells* (Ramble on Bach's aria "Sheep May Graze in Safety When a Goodly Shepherd Watches O'er Them"). (Bach-Grainger) Eight sides. Percy Grainger (Piano). Four 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 166. \$6.

BEETHOVEN
C-67996D
and
C-67997D

SONATA in *D Minor*, Op. 31, No. 2. Four sides. Walter Gieseking (Piano). Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

These two Columbia releases are outstanding for many reasons, but chief among them is the really magnificent recording. Piano reproduction has improved by leaps and bounds of late, and in consequence there are now available plenty of first-rate piano records. But these two sets will stand up with the very best of them, and in fact come about as close to the real thing as any piano record we recall hearing. The Grainger set is a remarkable recording achievement, and the Gieseking—gratifyingly recorded, too—is an almost perfect example of the interpretive art at its best.

The Bach album is a felicitous affair, comprising three organ works and an aria arranged for piano. It is a well-selected group of compositions, and they are all admirably adapted to Grainger's bold, forthright manner of playing. The Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, of course, is the same one that the Philadelphia Orchestra recorded so superbly several years ago. Organ recordings of the work are also available. Given here in the Tausig-Busoni arrangement, it makes an imposing piano piece, and Grainger plays it brilliantly and with the utmost care and precision. The clarity of the recording is nothing short of amazing; each note is heard distinctly; neither bass nor treble is marred by any undue distortion; both come out with the authentic ring. As a piece of recording alone, this is a notable disc, and in its way is as sensational as the Philadelphia Orchestra's version of the same work. The Prelude and Fugue in A Minor and the Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor—given here in the Liszt piano arrangements—are available on records in the original organ versions. Grainger plays them exuberantly, and the fine recording brings out his rendition with almost uncanny realism. The final number, *Blithe Bells*, an arrangement by Grainger of Bach's aria *Sheep May Graze in Safety When a Goodly Shepherd Watches O'er Them*, is admirably done. The pianist tosses it off delightfully. Throughout the album his playing is notable for its strength and fire, its brilliance and firmness, and its robust vigor. These qualities seem to be of prime importance in recording work, judging from the successful reproduction obtainable from these records.



The Giesecking discs, for excellence of recording and beauty of interpretation, belong with the two recent Columbia records of Beethoven's *Leonore No. 3* Overture. Finer reproduction and more perfect and satisfying playing in either set would be rather hard to imagine. Walter Giesecking's talents as a pianist have not hitherto been set forth very persuasively by the phonograph. Denied the opportunity of making many records, most of the few that he has made have been spoiled by abominable recording. Moreover, the music that he has selected—or perhaps that has been selected for him—to record has in most cases been pretty feeble stuff. In brief, the superlatively competent Giesecking heard in the concert hall had little or nothing in common with the inadequate and tinkling Giesecking one encountered on records; his name printed on the labels, in fact, was the only really convincing proof that it was Giesecking performing. Now all that has been pleasantly altered, for these records of his rendition of Beethoven's Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2, reproduce his efforts about as well as they could be reproduced at the present moment,—at least on the phonograph.

Highly dramatic and impressive, the Sonata is a moving piece of music. When its glorious thunders and eloquent whispers are set going by a master like Giesecking, the result is genuinely thrilling. The pianoforte Beethoven—considered by many to be somewhat inferior to the symphonic Beethoven—comes close to equaling the composer of the nine symphonies and the last quartets. Giesecking's rendition is incomparably finished and smooth; it is also charged with life and feeling, so that the performance is by no means simply a remarkable technical feat; it is, in short, an interpretation only rarely equalled in the concert hall and not thus far even approached on records. This is high praise, to be sure, and suspiciously superlative, but the records justify it.

BRAHMS	{	VARIATIONS AND FUGUE <i>on a Theme by Handel</i> , Op. 24.
V-7430		Six sides. Benno Moiseivitch (Piano).
to V-7432		Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-114. \$6.50.

This set was reviewed from the imported pressings on page 269 of the September, 1930, *Disques*. It is interesting to note that the H.M.V. recording of the Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Paganini is also repressed by Victor and issued in America this month. The set is reviewed under Additions to the RCA Victor Catalogue, printed elsewhere in this issue.

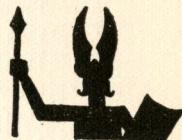
CHOPIN	{	SONATA in B Flat Minor, Op. 35. Two sides. Sergei Rachmaninoff (Piano). One 12-inch long-playing disc. \$4.50.
V-L7000		

The Chopin Sonata is an excellent piece of work, and is one of the most successful records on the first list of program transcriptions. When the work appeared last February as one of the regular Victor end-of-the-month releases, it came in an album of four 10-inch discs, the Sonata occupying seven of the eight record sides. Now the entire work is put on the two sides of a single 12-inch long-playing record. The "dubbing" has been capably done. Not only is it almost impossible to distinguish where the old record sides ended, but the reproduction in the long-playing record is as fine as it is in the standard set. Two movements are on the

first side of the record, two on the reverse. The label, however, neglects to provide this altogether desirable information, an omission which it is to be hoped will be quickly remedied. The standard set was reviewed on page 517 of the February, 1931, issue of *Disques*. Rachmaninoff's expressive interpretation sounds far more impressive here than it does on the standard set because each movement is played without a break, and the effect, in consequence, is very realistic.



OPERA



SULLIVAN
V-L11605
to
V-L11607 } H.M.S. PINAFORE: *Comic Opera in Two Acts.* (Gilbert-Sullivan) Eighteen sides. D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Three 12-inch long-playing discs. \$3 each.

MASCAGNI
V-L11601
to
V-L11603 } CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA: *Opera in One Act.* Eighteen sides. Principals, Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala conducted by Carlo Sabajno. Three 12-inch long-playing discs. \$3 each.

Both of these sets have been reviewed in *Disques* from the standard records—*Pinafore* on page 468 of the January, 1931, issue and *Cavalleria Rusticana* on page 81 of the April, 1931, issue. As standard sets, each opera occupied nine 12-inch records; in long-playing form each work is given complete on three 12-inch long-playing records. Listening to extended compositions like these played from the program transcriptions is undeniably comfortable and luxurious. Record sides have to be changed only six times; before no less than eighteen trips to the machine were required. The advantages are so palpable that they need no especial laboring.

Coming to the matter of reproduction, however, one's enthusiasm diminishes somewhat. The standard sets, in brief, give by far the better and more realistic reproduction. The program transcriptions are "copies" of the original records in every sense of the word. They bear the same relation to the standard records as the carbon copy does to the typescript. The recording is weaker; it is less colorful; and it is not so clear. The solo voices come out very well, but the reproduction of the chorus and orchestra leaves much to be desired.

The record collector is often confronted with puzzling problems, but never before, we imagine, has he been offered one so strange as this one. The standard set, on the one hand, gives the finer reproduction. But it is more expensive, and the continuity of the work is spoiled by eighteen interruptions. The long-playing set, on the other hand, comes in more compact and convenient form and gives generous slices of the music without pause. It also does not make so devastating an inroad into the collector's hard-pushed pocket-book. But along with these advantages he will have to accept less satisfying reproduction. Collectors with sensitive ears will not waste much time pondering the matter.



VERDI
C-GQX10069
to
C-GQX10073
IMPORTED

ERNANI: *Abridged Opera*. Ten sides. Italian Operatic Artists, La Scala Chorus and Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli.
Five 12-inch discs in album. \$10.

THE CAST

Elvira.....	Iva Pacetti
Ernani.....	Antonio Melandri
Don Carlo.....	Gino Vanelli
Don Ruy Gomez de Silva.....	Corrado Zambelli
Giovanna.....	Ida Mannarini
Don Riccardo.....	Giuseppe Nessi
Jago.....	Aristide Baracchi

DONIZETTI
C-GQX10093
to
C-GQX10098
IMPORTED

ELISIR D'AMORE: *Abridged Opera*. Twelve sides. Italian Operatic Artists, La Scala Chorus and Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli.
Six 12-inch discs in album. \$12.

THE CAST

Adina.....	Ines Alfani Tellini
Nemorino.....	Christy Solari
Belcore.....	Lorenzo Conati
Dulcamara.....	Edoardo Faticanti
Giannetta.....	Ida Mannarini

The first of the Columbia abridged versions of Italian operas was reviewed in this place in the June issue. The work selected was Donizetti's *La Favorita*, and the achievement, principally because of the mediocre singing, was not very impressive. This recording of *Ernani*, deftly boiled down so as to include only the most attractive numbers, represents a definite improvement on the earlier effort. The singing is by no means superlative, but it is at least not offensive, and some of it is moderately good.

Ernani has not been recorded in complete form, and the chances are that it will be sometime before it attains that distinction. In the meantime, admirers of the work can get along without undue discomfort with this abbreviated version. The opera is one of Verdi's earliest, and of his early operas it is perhaps the most popular—at all events, it is played more often than any of the others. Based on Victor Hugo's drama, *Hernani*, the work, because of certain references that the police felt unseemly in view of the political situation, experienced some difficulties during its first performances. But it was tremendously popular, and even today there are many who admire its stirring melodies. It is these melodies, indeed, that save the work from oblivion, for otherwise its lack of polish and finish, the crude melodrama of the plot and the excessive noise of the orchestration would certainly have relegated the piece to that especial limbo reserved for bad operas.

The performance here is adequate throughout, and the choral and orchestral parts are capably handled. The recording, being good, needs no comment.

The sparkling music of Donizetti's *Elisir d'Amore* sounds uncommonly well in

this recording, even in spite of some atrocious singing. Donizetti's comic operas are much to be preferred to his more serious and tragic works. A master of humor and gaiety in music, it is a pity that he didn't write more operas calling for these qualities and not attempt such things as *Lucia*, which, no matter how solid their virtues may be, inevitably seem somewhat absurd. In this version of *Elisir d'Amore*, competently abridged, the performance is spirited and lively. Some of the singers, unfortunately, are very poor—in particular the ineffable Cristy Solari, who infallibly succeeds in spoiling every record in which he participates—but the whole performance moves forward with such swiftness that one inclines to overlook, or at least tolerate, these things. The chorus gives a particularly gratifying performance, and Molajoli's orchestra, as usual, plays admirably. As in *Ernani*, the recording is excellent.



VERDI V-7438	{ AÏDA: Act I— <i>Ritorna vincitor</i> . Rosa Ponselle (Soprano) with orchestra. One side and TRAVIATA: Act I— <i>Ah, fors' è lui</i> . One side. Lucrezia Bori (Soprano) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.
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Now that so many of the standard operas have been recorded in complete form, it is somewhat doubtful whether there is much demand for single recordings of well-known arias. If there is still a large public for such records, the above one should enjoy considerable popularity. It would be difficult to imagine a better rendition of the *Aïda* aria than Rosa Ponselle's. Lucrezia Bori's singing in the *Traviata* selection is not so good as Rosa Ponselle's, but nonetheless it is still very fine. The recording is happily free from any signs of distortion or over-amplification.

DELIBES C-G4056M	{ LAKMÉ: Act 2— <i>Bell Song</i> . Two sides. Lily Pons (Soprano) with orchestra conducted by G. Cloéz. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.
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DELIBES SMETANA C-50307D	{ LAKMÉ: Act 1— <i>Lakmé-Mallika—Sous le Dôme épais</i> . (Delibes) One side and THE BARTERED BRIDE: <i>Si pur amour, si doux serments</i> . (Smetana) One side. Germaine Feraldy (Soprano) and André Bernadet (Mezzo-Soprano) with orchestra conducted by Elie Cohen. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.
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The Lily Pons disc provides a curious example of duplication. She has already recorded the same selection for Victor, and the disc was reviewed on page 35 of the March, 1931, issue of *Disques*. The orchestra comes out a little more clearly in the Columbia record, but outside of that the two versions are substantially the same. Those who care for this type of singing will find either record satisfactory. . . . The duet from *Lakmé*, sung on the second disc, is delightful, and the two voices blend extremely well. On the reverse side Mme. Feraldy sings one of the soprano airs from *The Bartered Bride*, and it, too, is agreeable music. On both sides Elie Cohen conducts a well-balanced orchestral accompaniment.



VOCAL

O'REILLY
TESCHE-
MACHER
V-1497

- { FOR YOU ALONE. (P. J. O'Reilly-Henry E. Geehl) One side and
BECAUSE. (Edward Teschemacher-Guy d'Hardelot) One side.
Richard Crooks (Tenor) with orchestra.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Crooks has made enough records so that collectors by now know whether or not they like the sort of thing he records. The two heavily sentimental numbers above are representative of his recording work.

R. STRAUSS
B-90208

- { CÄCILIE. One side and
BEFREIT. One side. Rosette Anday (Contralto) with piano accompaniment by Franz Rupp. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

These are lovely songs, and they are rendered with sympathy and understanding by Rosette Anday, whose voice is recorded without the over-amplification the Polydor recorders are sometimes guilty of. The piano accompaniments by Franz Rupp are beautifully done.

BACH
C-G4057M

- { JESUS, MEINE ZUVERSICHT. One side and
AUS TIEFER NOT. One side. Lotte Lehmann (Soprano) with organ accompaniment by Paul Mania. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Lotte Lehmann hasn't appeared on the local lists for a long time. This is a beautiful record, sung with sincerity, intelligence and impressive skill. The organ accompaniment comes out very well. The recording is clear.

LISZT
BOHM
C-G4055M

- { ES MUSS EIN WUNDERBARES SEIN. (Lizt) One side and
STILL WIE DIE NACHT. (Bohm) One side. Richard Tauber (Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Ernst Haucke. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

KÁLMÁN
SIECZYNSKI
C-G9044M

- { ZWEI MÄRCHENAUGEN from the Operetta "The Circus Princess." (Kálmán) One side and
WIEN, DU STADT MEINER TRÄUME. (Sieczynski) One side. Richard Tauber (Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Ernst Hauke. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Richard Tauber made his New York début last month, and the reception accorded him, from both the public and the critics, was an enthusiastic one. A recording veteran if ever there was one, he has a really tremendous list of records to his credit, and the local Columbia Company has been issuing two or three of them on each of its lists the last couple of months. The selections given here display his voice to excellent advantage, and the recording in all of them is first-rate.

VOLONCELLO

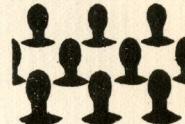


VIVALDI
SGAMBATI
V-1542

{ INTERMEZZO. (Vivaldi) One side and
SERENATA NAPOLETANA, Op. 24, No. 2. (Sgambati-
Bouman) One side. Pablo Casals (Violoncello) with piano
accompaniment. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

The Vivaldi number was recorded in Europe, and the accompanist is Blas-
Net; the Sgambati piece was apparently recorded in this country, and here the
accompanist is Nicolai Mednikoff. Both pieces are well-done.

CHORAL



BACH
B-90209

{ MOTET: "Der Geist hilft unserer Schwachheit auf": (a) Fugue
—Der aber die Herzen forschet; (b) Finale—Du heilige Brunst,
Süßer Trost. Two sides. Choir of the St. Thomas Church,
Leipzig, conducted by Karl Straube.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

The two selections given here are from one of the very few authentic Bach
motets. All in all, it is an excellent record. The singing is spirited, and the
reproduction is a fine piece of work, clear, full and clean-cut.

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COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS*

—New Issues—



ELGAR: VARIATIONS ON AN ORIGINAL THEME ("ENIGMA") OP. 36. Sir Edward Elgar, most widely known of modern British composers, produced in his famous "Enigma" Variations a work of extraordinary musical interest and melodic value which has become a fixture in the repertory of the great orchestras the world over.

The term "Enigma" as applied to the work did not emanate from Sir Edward himself but was given to it at an early date by those intrigued by the mystery inherent in its conception and execution. Just what this is can best be stated by quoting a remark made by the composer in answer to questioning on the subject: "I have sketched, for their amusement and mine, the idiosyncrasies of fourteen of my friends, not necessarily musicians; but this is a personal matter, and need not have been mentioned publicly. The Variations should stand simply as a piece of music. The Enigma I will not explain—its 'dark saying' must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the apparent connection between the Variations and the Theme is often of the slightest texture. Further, through and over the whole set, another and larger theme goes, but is not played...."

MASTERWORKS SET NO. 165

Elgar: Variations on an Original Theme ("Enigma"), Op. 36. Sir Hamilton Harty and Hallé Orchestra. In Seven Parts, on Four Twelve-Inch Records. \$6.00 with Album.

BACH: TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR PIANO. According to Mr. Percy Grainger, who recorded this extraordinarily successful piano set, the three transcriptions for piano by Tausig, Busoni and Liszt of Bach's organ fugues with introductions are the most popular and successful achievements in this field. The main impression created by these works (continues Mr. Grainger) is that of cosmic grandeur—something akin to the immensity of the universe or of immortality. Yet this grandeur is often informed with that sweetness and suavity that is the outcome of true strength—for many of Bach's phrases move with the muscular smoothness and litho poise of a panther. "Blithe Bells" is a free ramble by Mr. Grainger on Bach's aria "Sheep May Graze in Safety When a Goodly Shepherd Watches O'er Them."

MASTERWORKS SET NO. 166

Bach: Transcriptions for Piano—Toccata and Fugue in D Minor; Prelude and Fugue in A Minor; Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor; Blithe Bells (Ramble on Bach's aria "Sheep May Graze in Safety When a Goodly Shepherd Watches O'er Them"). Percy Grainger. Set of Four Records. \$6.00 with Album.

BEETHOVEN: SONATA IN D MINOR, OP. 31, NO. 2, FOR PIANOFORTE. With this beautiful sonata, one of the finest productions of Beethoven's muse, we introduce Walter Giesecking, a prodigious figure among present-day concert pianists and one of the most important artists at present before the public. The D Minor Sonata was composed in 1802 and is one of Beethoven's outstanding works in this form, containing a most impressive and beautiful adagio or slow movement, of the kind in which Beethoven always excelled.

Beethoven: Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2, for Pianoforte. Walter Giesecking. In Four Parts on Two Twelve-Inch Records, 67996-D and 67997-D. Each, \$1.50.

HONEGGER: PACIFIC, 231—SYMPHONIC MOVEMENT FOR ORCHESTRA. The score of this remarkable composition, conducted for our records by Honegger himself, presents this explanatory preface by the composer: "I have always had a passionate love for locomotives. . . What I have sought to accomplish in this piece is not to imitate the noises of a locomotive but rather to translate into music a visual impression and a physical sensation. The music begins with an objective contemplation—the tranquil breathing of the engine in repose. Then follow the straining effort to start, the gathering speed, the progress from the lyric mood to the pathetic one of a three hundred ton engine hurling itself through the night at a speed of a hundred and twenty kilometers an hour. As a subject, I have chosen a locomotive of the 'Pacific' type (known as 231), used for heavy trains at high speed." It is natural to find a most vivid and realistic reading of Honegger's famous piece given by the composer himself.

Honegger: Pacific, 231—Symphonic Movement for Orchestra. Arthur Honegger and Symphony Orchestra. In Two Parts on One Twelve-Inch Record, G-67998-D†. \$2.00.

† This record is offered for sale in U. S. A. and Canada only

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"Magic Notes"

Additions to the RCA Victor Catalogue

It has become an annual custom of the RCA Victor Company to add to its catalogue in the Fall a number of repressions from its foreign affiliations' lists. The records that comprise this year's list not only include some of the outstanding recordings released in Europe last year; they also embrace several domestic recordings by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Schumann-Heink, Mary Garden and Paderewski. These have not hitherto been issued, and so are of more than passing interest. Inasmuch as the majority of the foreign repressions have already been reviewed in *Disques*, comment here will necessarily have to be brief.

ORCHESTRA

BENVENUTO CELLINI: *Overture*. (Berlioz) Three sides and LES TROYENS À CARTHAGE: *Overture*. (Berlioz) One side. Symphony Orchestra of Paris conducted by Pierre Monteux. Two 12-inch discs (V-11140 and V-11141). \$1.50 each.

THE WALK TO THE PARADISE GARDEN (*from the opera, "A Village Romeo and Juliet"*). (Delius) Two sides. New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Geoffrey Toye. One 12-inch disc (V-11142). \$1.50.

RUSES D'AMOUR: (a) *Introduction and Valse*. (b) *Ballabile des Paysans et des Paysannes*, Op. 61. (Glazounow) Two sides. Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock. One 12-inch disc (V-7423). \$2.

MEFISTO: *Waltz*. (Liszt) Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-11161). \$1.50.

LE TRIOMPHE DE L'AMOUR: *Notturno*. (Lulli) One side and (a) ALCESTE: *Prelude*. (Lulli) (b) THÉSÉE: *Marche*. (Lulli) One side. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski. One 12-inch disc (V-7424). \$2.

KHOWANTCHINA: *Persian Dances*. (Moussorgsky-Arr. Rimsky-Korsakow) Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-11135). \$1.50.

MENUET ANTIQUE. (Ravel) Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola. One 12-inch disc (V-11133). \$1.50.

LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN. (Ravel) Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by

Piero Coppola. Two 12-inch discs (V-11150 and V-11151). \$1.50 each.

TANCREDI: *Overture*. (Rossini) Two sides. Royal Opera Orchestra, Covent Garden, conducted by Vincenzo Bellezza. One 12-inch disc (V-11137). \$1.50.

LA BOUTIQUE FANTASQUE: *Selections*. (Rossini-Respighi-Arr. Carr) Two sides. Royal Opera Orchestra, Covent Garden, conducted by Eugène Goossens. One 12-inch disc (V-11147). \$1.50.

SUITE EN FA. (Roussel) Three sides and LA NAISSANCE DE LA LYRE. (Roussel) One side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola. Two 12-inch discs (V-11152 and V-11153). \$1.50 each.

SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE: *Chinese March*. (Strawinsky) Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-11160). \$1.50.

Victor has already repressed and issued in this country Monteux's superb recording of the *Fantastic Symphony*, in many ways one of the outstanding releases of the year; and now the same conductor's recording of the brilliant *Benvenuto Cellini* Overture is put out. It is deftly played and brilliantly recorded, and all in all can be rated as an exceptionally interesting release, providing you like Berlioz. The set was reviewed from the imported pressings on page 213 of the July, 1931, issue of *Disques*. . . . Delius' opera, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, was written in 1902. Opera impresarios have not exactly fought for the privilege of producing the work—which is certainly not convincing proof of their competence,—and, indeed, it takes painstaking research to discover just when and where it has been performed. The intermezzo given here is beautiful music, wistful, melancholy and expressive. It is, moreover, music that should appeal to everyone—at least, to those who trouble to read the lists of the better records. It is frequently hinted that Delius' music is highly esoteric and only for a select few. This lovely record hardly supports such a contention.

Glazounow's ballet, *Ruses d'Amour*, is pleasant, agreeable music, colorfully orchestrated and tuneful, but otherwise not distinguished. Glazounow, who belongs to the older Russian school, has been fairly conspicuous on the lists the last year or so, and

New Victor Records MUSICAL MASTERPIECE SERIES

Symphony No. 2 in B Minor by Alexander Borodin. Performed by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates, on three double-faced 12-inch Victor Records, Nos. 11163-11165 . . . in automatic sequence, Nos. 11166-11168. In Album M-113, with explanatory booklet. List price, \$5.00.

This symphony, performed all too seldom, will be welcomed by music lovers everywhere. Borodin, one of the famous Russian "five" certainly achieved the aim of that group in the deep national spirit of his second symphony. He delved into early Russian history . . . acquainted himself with the Oriental influence which tinged early Russian music and incorporated these characteristics in his composition. For example, the repetition of the opening theme is an acknowledged Oriental device. In this symphony is music that is stirring . . . martial . . . magnificent! You will enjoy its every measure, and deem it a valuable and entertaining addition to your record collection.

Variations on a Theme by Handel by Johannes Brahms. Played by Benno Moïseïvitch on three double-faced 12-inch Victor Records, Nos. 7430-7432 . . . in automatic sequence, Nos. 7433-7435. In Album M-114, with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

The Brahms Handel Variations have come into prominence lately on the programs of several of the world's most famous artists, but no one has interpreted them more brilliantly than Benno Moïseïvitch. If you know the music you will jump at the chance of owning the records . . . if it is new to you, you have a rare treat ahead. Contrasted style . . . effects of orchestral instruments . . . lovely melody . . . make this early Brahms work one of unusual interest. It should have a place in your record library along with the Brahms Symphonies.

RED SEAL RECORDS

Fugue in G Minor (Bach-Stokowski)
and

Christ lag in Todesbanden (Bach-Stokowski) Played by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on Victor Record 7437. List price, \$2.00.

Aïda—Ritorna vincitor and

Traviata—Ah, fors'è lui. Sung by Rosa Ponselle and Lucrezia Bori, respectively, on Victor Record 7438. List price, \$2.00.

For You Alone and

Because Sung by Richard Crooks on Victor Record 1497. List price, \$1.50.

Hänsel and Gretel Overture Played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Willem Mengelberg, on Victor Record 7436. List price, \$2.00.

Intermezzo (Vivaldi) and

Serenata Napoletana (Sgambati) Played by Pablo Casals on Victor Record 1542. List price, \$1.50.



R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey

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Additions to the RCA Victor Catalogue (Continued)

those who liked the recordings of his *Seasons* and *Scènes de Ballet* will find this disc a good one to add to their collection. Stock and his Chicago Orchestra give a competent performance, and their efforts are pleasingly recorded. . . . The *Mephisto Waltz* forms the second part, *Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke*, of Liszt's *Zwei Episoden aus Lenau's Faust* for orchestra. Ingeniously orchestrated, but not nearly so diabolical as its title would indicate, it is enjoyable music. Coates plays it with tremendous gusto. The recorders are up to their usual form.

It comes as something of a surprise to find a Philadelphia Orchestra record tucked away on a list like this one. Because of its immense popularity, Stokowski's orchestra can generally be depended upon to flutter those who follow sales statistics. It is an attractive record and warrants attention, not only because it is a good piece of recording, but also because it gives us several examples of the music of Jean Baptiste Lulli, who has not hitherto been overwhelmed by the attentions of the recording companies. Born in Florence in 1639, he was for fourteen years director, composer, conductor, stage-manager, ballet-master and machinist of the Paris Opéra, performing all these duties with uncommon skill and despatch. In addition, he is said to have been the founder of French opera. Among his works are many ballets, divertissements and operas, as well as an imposing quantity of instrumental and church music. *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, produced at St. Germaine-en-Laye in 1672, is an opera-ballet in five acts. The Nocturne is quiet and subdued but somewhat monotonous. More interesting are the selections from *Alceste* and *Thésée* on the reverse side. *Alceste*, Lulli's third opera, was produced in 1674. A crisp and altogether delightful little affair is the March taken from *Thésée*. The playing is first-rate, and so is the recording.

The Persian Dances from *Khowantchina* are spirited but somewhat commonplace. Coates plays them with his usual zest, and the recording is very good. . . . The *Menuet Antique* of Ravel has also been recorded by Wolff and the Lamoureux Orchestra for Brunswick. There is little to choose between the two versions, since both are recorded with uncommon skill and both are competently played. The work itself is delightful, with its charming air and ingenious orchestration.

Coppola's record, listed here, was reviewed from the imported pressing on page 216 of the August, 1930, issue of *Disques*. The *Menuet Antique*, incidentally, was recently given by Kleiber and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, and was then advertised as a first performance. Not infrequently, as the above case—but one of many—readily demonstrates, the record collector hears and becomes familiar with music long before the concert-goer. . . . Coppola's recording of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* was reviewed from the imported pressings on page 352 of the October, 1931, issue of *Disques*.

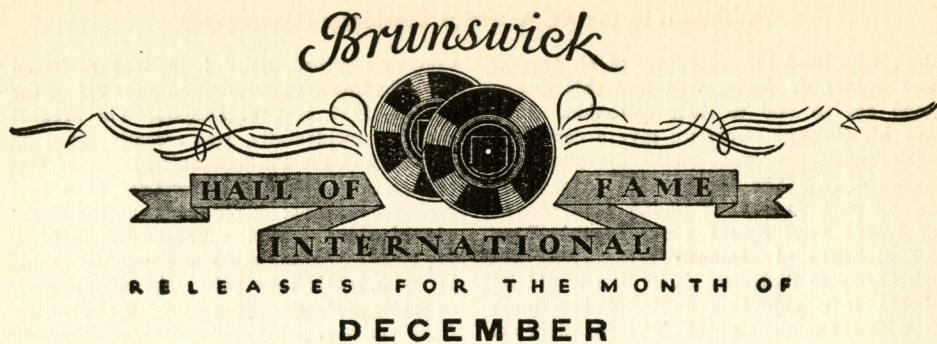
The *Tancredi* Overture is well-recorded and played, but the music itself seems worn and empty. The Rossini overtures quickly pall. . . . The selections from *La Boutique Fantasque*, on the other hand, are altogether delightful, and the disc, being well-recorded and played, can be highly recommended. It was reviewed from the imported pressing on page 261 of the August, 1931, issue of *Disques*. . . . The beautifully recorded Roussel records were reviewed by Joseph Cottler on page 356 of the October, 1931, issue of *Disques*. . . . Mr. Cottler also passed on the *Song of the Nightingale* selection last April, when the imported pressing arrived.

CONCERTO

FLUTE CONCERTO: *Andante and Finale*. (Mozart) Two sides. John Amadio (Flute) and orchestra. One 12-inch disc (V-11132). \$1.50.

ORGAN CONCERTO in B Flat. (Handel) Three sides and WATER MUSIC Suite. (Handel) One side. E. Bullock (Organ) and string orchestra. Two 10-inch discs (V-4219 and V-4220). \$1 each.

The Mozart Concerto for flute and orchestra is K. 314. A more complete and on the whole more satisfying recording of the work was recently issued by Marcel Moyse and an orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola, and the release was noticed on page 125 of the May, 1931, issue of *Disques*. John Amadio here plays two movements with grace and skill, but the orchestral support is rather thin. The recording is satisfactory. . . . The Handel Concerto is one of the most attractive sets on this list. Nothing could be more delightful



90204 to 90206 incl.	BEETHOVEN —SYMPHONY No. 1—C Major, Op. 21 Three Records THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN HANS PFITZNER Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$4.50 Complete with Album
90207	CÉSAR FRANCK —REDEMPTION—Interlude Parts I and II—Symphonic Poem LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50
90208	RICHARD STRAUSS —BEFREIT (Freed) CÄCILIE (Cecily) Contralto Solos in German— ROSETTE ANDAY of Vienna State Opera Piano Accompaniments—FRANZ RUPP	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50
90209	BACH —DER ABEN DIE HERZEN FORSCHET—Fugue (He who searcheth the hearts) DU HEILIGE BRUNST, DU SÜSSER TROST—Finale (Divine Comforter) From the Motet "Der Geist Hilft unserer Schwachheit auf" Sung in German by MALE CHOIR of the ST. THOMAS CHURCH, LEIPZIG KARL STRAUBE, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50

Brunswick Records

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Additions to the RCA Victor Catalogue (Continued)

than this buoyant music of Handel's, and the organ reproduction is excellent. On the odd side of the record a movement from the *Water Music* Suite is given, and it, too, is well-recorded. These two records deserve your especial attention.

PIANO

SONATA in C Major ("Waldstein"), Op. 53. (Beethoven) Five sides and **SONATA in E Flat: Scherzo-Allegro vivace**, Op. 31, No. 3. (Beethoven) One side. Frederic Lamond (Piano). Three 12-inch discs (V-11144 to V-11146). \$1.50 each.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY PAGANINI, Op. 35. (Brahms) Four sides. Wilhelm Bachaus (Piano). Two 12-inch discs (V-7419 and V-7420). \$2 each.

PRELUDIUM, CHORALE AND FUGUE. (Franck) Four sides. Alfred Cortot (Piano). Two 12-inch discs (V-7331 and V-7332). \$2 each.

MAZURKAS in A Flat Major, Op. 59, No. 2, and in D, Op. 33, No. 2. (Chopin) Two sides. Ignace Jan Paderewski (Piano). One 10-inch disc (V-1541). \$1.50.

All these records, with the exception of the Paderewski disc, have been reviewed in *Disques* from the imported pressings. The *Waldstein* Sonata set, in Lamond's version, was considered on page 266 of the August, 1931, issue. It is very well done. . . . The Brahms *Paganini* Variations appeared as an importation somewhat over a year ago, and the set was reviewed on page 269 of the September, 1930, *Disques*. . . . The Franck Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, a fine set, was reviewed in the first issue of *Disques*, March, 1930. . . . The Mazurkas that Paderewski plays are attractive, and he tosses them off gracefully. The recording is good.

OPERA

DER ROSENKAVALIER: (a) *Kann mich auch an ein Mädel erinnern*. (b) *Die Zeit sie ist ein sonderbar Ding*. (Richard Strauss) Two sides. Barbara Kemp (Soprano) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Leo Blech. One 12-inch disc (V-11134). \$1.50.

DIE MEISTERSINGER: (a) *Am stillen Herd*. (b) *Fanget an!* (Wagner) Two sides. Max Lorenz (Tenor) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich. One 12-inch disc (V-11162). \$1.50.

DIE MEISTERSINGER: (a) *Was duftet doch der Flieder*. (b) *Kein' Regel wollte da passen*. (Wagner) Two sides. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-7425). \$2.

DIE MEISTERSINGER: *Jerum! Jerum!* (Wagner) One side and **TANNHÄUSER**: *Blick' ich umber*. (Wagner) One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) with London and New Symphony Orchestras conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-7426). \$2.

DIE MEISTERSINGER: (a) *Grüss' Got mein Junker*. (b) *Mein Freund, in holder Jugendzeit*. (Wagner) Two sides. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone), Rudolph Laubenthal (Tenor) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-7427). \$2.

DIE MEISTERSINGER: (a) *Abendlich glühend*. (b) *Aha! da streicht*. (Wagner) Two sides. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone), Rudolph Laubenthal (Tenor) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc (V-7428). \$2.

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE: (a) *Wohin nun Tristan scheidet*. (b) *Wie sie selig*. (Wagner) Two sides. Lauritz Melichor (Tenor) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Heger. One 12-inch disc (V-11136). \$1.50.

The *Rosenkavalier* record makes a welcome addition to the still meagre list of discs from the opera. Barbara Kemp sings beautifully, and the accompaniment by Dr. Blech and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra is very effective. The recording throughout both sides is splendidly done. . . . Since the complete *Meistersinger*—like the complete *Rosenkavalier*—still remains a thing of the future, collectors of Wagnerian records will view with satisfaction the five listed above. With the exception of V-7425, they have all been reviewed in *Disques*—on page 472 of the

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Additions to the RCA Victor Catalogue (Continued)

January, 1931, issue—and so need no further comment here, save that they are superbly recorded and beautifully done. Record V-7425 is a re-recording of Victor record V-6789, which was also sung by Friedrich Schorr, though in that record the accompanying orchestra was that of the Berlin State Opera under Blech, while here Albert Coates and the London Symphony provide the orchestral background. The new disc is better recorded, and the orchestra comes out far more clearly and powerfully; Schorr's singing in both is very much the same. . . . The *Tristan und Isolde* selections would have been more valuable if they had not already been recorded in the complete Columbia album. In view of the fact that there still remains a great deal of *Tristan*, especially in the third act, to be recorded, it is unfortunate that so much talent and skill as are employed on this disc should not have been devoted to the unrecorded sections. At any rate, the disc is a fine one: singer, orchestra and recorders give their best, and the result is a first-rate piece of interpretation and recording.

CHORAL

ST. MATTHEW'S PASSION: Chorus No. 26—*I Would Beside My Lord*. Chorus No. 25—*Behold How Throbs*. (Bach) Two sides. Walter Widdop (Tenor), Philharmonic Choir and orchestra conducted by Charles Kennedy Scott. One 12-inch disc (V-7429). \$2.

ALTO RHAPSODY from Goethe's "Harzreise im Winter," Op. 53. (Brahms) Four sides. Sigrid Onegin (Contralto) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra and Berlin Doctors' Choir conducted by Kurt Singer. Two 12-inch discs (V-7417 and V-7418). \$2 each.

REQUIEM. (Fauré) Ten sides. Chorus of the Bach Society with orchestra and organ conducted by Gustave Bret. Five 12-inch discs (V-11154 to V-11158). \$1.50 each.

It is to be hoped that the two albums containing the B Minor Mass have sold sufficiently well to encourage the manufacturers to issue a complete *St. Matthew Passion* sometime reasonably soon. Recording, once so poor in most choral records, has now reached the point where the singing of a large chorus can be put on discs with eminently satisfying

results, and the value of having these great works of Bach's in permanent, easily accessible form is obvious. As it is, the list of excerpts from the *St. Matthew Passion* is not an imposing one, so that a disc as ably turned out as this one should not have much trouble in finding an eager public. Beautifully sung and recorded with a high degree of realism, the noble music contained on this disc has an appeal by no means limited to musicians only. None with ears can successfully resist the overpowering grandeur of these sweeping choruses, caught here so vividly by the recorders. Walter Widdop is an acceptable soloist, and the anonymous orchestra plays extremely well. The instrumental solos come out very clearly, especially the harpsichord, which is always plainly audible but never with any suggestion of distortion.

The Brahms *Alto Rhapsody* was reviewed on page 531 of the February, 1931, issue of *Disques*. The Fauré *Requiem*, which arrived as an importation two or three months ago, was considered on page 316 of the September *Disques*.

VOCAL

LE COR. (de Vigny-Flégier) One side and THE OLD CORPORAL. (Dargomysky) One side. Feodor Chaliapin (Bass) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc (V-7422). \$2.

OVER THE STEPPE, Op. 5, No. 1. (Gretchaninow) One side and CARMEN: *En vain pour eviter*. (Bizet) One side. Mary Garden (Soprano) with piano and orchestral accompaniment. One 10-inch disc (V-1539). \$1.50.

PLAISIR D'AMOUR. (Florian-Martini) One side and ETUDE in E Major. (Litvinne-Chopin) One side. Nina Koshetz (Soprano) with piano. One 12-inch disc (V-9675). \$1.50.

DIE FORELLE. (Schubert) One side and LENZ. (Hildach) One side. Ernestine Schumann-Heink (Contralto) with piano. One 10-inch disc (V-1540). \$1.50.

JOSUA: *O Hätt'ich Jubals Harf'*. (Handel) One side and DIE HEILIGEN DREI KÖNIGE AUS MORGENLAND. (R. Strauss) One side. Elisabeth Schumann (Soprano) and Vienna State Opera Orchestra. One 12-inch disc (V-7209). \$2.

Additions to the RCA Victor Catalogue (Continued)

ST. MATTHEW'S PASSION: *Erbarme dich mein Gott.* (Bach) Two sides. Maartje Offers (Contralto) and orchestra. Violin obbligato: Isolde Menges. One 12-inch disc (V-11143). \$1.50.

The Chaliapin disc is stirringly sung, and the recording is good. . . . The Gretchaninow song, *Over the Steppe*, is an effective piece, and it is appealingly sung by Mary Garden. The piano accompaniment is tasteful and well-recorded. The *Carmen* number is similarly well-presented, but its value as recording material is negligible these days. . . . The record by Nina Koshetz was reviewed on page 185 of the July, 1930, issue of *Disques*. . . . The Schumann-Heink record does not display her vocal gifts at their most arresting, and those who remember this artist in her prime will find here nothing but a melancholy echo of her voice. . . . The Elisabeth Schumann record was reviewed on page 100 of the May, 1930, issue of *Disques*. . . . The *St. Matthew's Passion* disc is an admirable one, well-recorded and splendidly sung.

ORGAN

CHORAL PRELUDE: *In Thee Is Joy.* (Bach) One side and TOCCATA IN D MINOR ("Dorian Mode"). (Bach) One side. Marcel Dupré (Organ). One 12-inch disc (V-7421). \$2.

CHORAL PRELUDE: *All Glory, Laud and Honor.* (Bach) One side and CHORAL PRELUDE: *Sleepers Awake, a Voice is Calling.* (Reger) One side. E. Bullock (Organ). One 12-inch disc (V-11159). \$1.50.

CHORALE NO. 1 IN E. (Franck) Four sides. Guy Weitz (Organ). Two 12-inch discs (V-36041 and V-36042). \$1.25 each.

The Chorale Prelude and Toccata played by Dupré were reviewed on page 534 of the February, 1931, issue of *Disques*. . . . Dr. Bullock's record of the Choral Preludes by Bach and Reger is an excellent one; the playing is accomplished, and the recording is impressive. . . . The Franck Chorale No. 1 was dealt with on page 135 of the June, 1930, issue of *Disques*.

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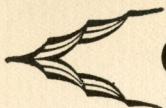
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CORRESPONDENCE



Chromium Needles

Editor, *Disques*:

I have tried the new RCA Victor chromium needles for use with the standard records, and have found them satisfactory except for the fact that they seem to damage the records. I want to preserve the life of my records as long as possible, and if these needles really do have a harmful effect, I don't want to use them. Can you advise me?

A. H. Todd

Houston, Texas.

Perhaps you have not been following the instructions printed on the needle container. Once the needle is in the pickup, it should not be removed until it is ready to be discarded. Nor should it be twisted around or turned while in the pickup. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasized.—Ed.

Wagner and the Phonograph

Editor, *Disques*:

No doubt many an owner of fine Wagnerian records has felt at times that they yield him a better appreciation of Wagner music than any other means of approach to it. And possibly such a listener has either felt that such a view of the matter is heresy or would be regarded as unpardonable by the musically orthodox. Such record owners may find interest and possibly comfort in words by Ernest Newman in which no reference whatever is made to records but which describe an ideal of music presentation which can at present be more closely approached by use of recorded music than in any other way. At the close of Newman's great book on "Wagner as Man and Artist," one of the most searching and profound of all the many books on Wagner, is a chapter headed "Wagner and Super-Wagner" in which Newman discusses the true significance of Wagner's contribution to music and the drama as distinguished from Wagner's own theories on the subject. Wagner's own instinctive musical sense, as Newman has amply shown, caused him to develop (as in *Tristan and Isolde*) toward an elimination of the mere crudely factual parts of drama not suited to music, and Newman looks toward further possibilities of the elimination of those elements of story telling that tend to restrict the range of music's imaginative

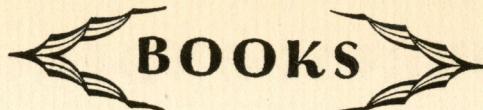
appeal and to become wearisome on repetition.

"Is it not possible," asks Newman "to construct an art form in which the mere facts that it is necessary for us to know are either assumed as known or set before us in the briefest possible way, so that music can take upon itself the whole burden of expression and the whole work of art be nothing but an outpouring of lofty, quintessential emotion? Can we not imagine something like the second act of *Tristan* with silent and only dimly visible actors, the music, helped by their gestures, telling us all that is in their souls, while they are too remote from us for the crude personality of the actors and the theatrical artificiality of the stage setting to jar upon us as they do at present? Cannot some story be taken as so well known to everyone that only the shadowiest hints of the course of it need be given to the spectator, the real drama being in the music? Or, to go a step further, cannot we dispense altogether with the stage and the visible actor, such external coherence as the music needs being afforded by impersonal voices floating through a darkened auditorium? The effect of disembodied voices can be made extraordinarily moving: in all my experience of concert-going I can remember no sensations comparable to those I felt during the Grail scene from *Parzifal* at one of the Three Choirs Festivals: the exquisite beauty of the boys' voices floating down from one knew not where was something that was almost too much for mortal senses to endure. Here, in the concealed, impersonal choir, is an instrument, I think, the full emotional power of which is not yet suspected by composers."

One may well amplify this comment of Newman by saying that composers as yet do not realize how much their music may benefit when perfect means are created through which music can be heard without the distracting and irrelevant influences growing out of the need of the actual physical presence of the performers. Wagner himself provided for the concealment of the orchestra at Bayreuth to get rid of the annoyance of distraction from the real function of the orchestra, which is to produce sounds and not to be seen in the various physical movements of the process.

MUSIC LOVER

Baltimore, Md.



BOOKS

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND THEIR MUSIC 1500-1750: *The Viols, and Other Bowed Instruments.* By Gerald R. Hayes. London: Oxford University Press. \$3.50.

This is the second of a series of five books by Mr. Hayes on musical instruments and their music from 1500 to 1750. The first volume, dealing with the treatment of instrumental music, was reviewed in this place in the April, 1930, issue of *Disques*. In that volume Mr. Hayes devoted considerable space to combating the assumption, accepted all too readily by many who should know better, that such instruments of the past as the lute, the viol and the recorder are now practically obsolete simply because they have been replaced by something definitely superior. He not only contended that many old instruments are fully the equal of their modern equivalents, or, more properly, what are commonly regarded as such, but he went even further and said that many of them are actually superior in tone quality.

In this second volume he first describes the making, the stringing, the fretting, the tuning, the bowing, and the method of holding and of playing the consort viols. The second section, which is rather brief, has to do with the *Lyra da braccia* and the *Lyra da gamba*. Part three deals with the violin family, and subsequent chapters describe the *Tromba marina*, the *Hurdy-gurdy* and the *Crwth*.

"I have studied this book in the light of a long life of practical experience, and I can say that I have not found a doubtful word or phrase in it, which means that the mass of information contained in the book is trustworthy." Thus Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch in his introduction. This, coming from so eminent an authority, is surely high praise, especially since Mr. Hayes tells us that Mr. Dolmetsch read the book both in manuscript and in proof.

An immense amount of information is packed in these pages, and Mr. Hayes presents his material in an interesting, well-ordered manner. He writes out of a wide experience and thorough knowledge of the instruments with which he deals, and his

book is full of quotations from the proper authorities. There are eleven excellently reproduced photographs of viols and bows, and valuable appendices and a good index complete an altogether charming volume for anyone interested in the subject.

The American agents for this book, published in England by the Oxford University Press, are Carl Fischer, Inc., New York, N. Y.

A SHORT OUTLINE OF MUSICAL HISTORY from *Ancient Times to the Present Day.* By Cuthbert Harris. Boston: The Arthur P. Schmidt Company. \$1.25.

This is an extremely rapid survey of the evolution of the art of music, and in fact only covers some sixty pages, many of which are largely given over to musical quotations. Necessarily the book makes no attempt to go into much detail, nor does the author approach his composers critically, confining himself, instead, to historical facts. Mr. Harris' information is reliable and tersely presented, and he has handled his material very deftly. At the end there is a chapter on musical instruments. The volume by itself is much too sketchy to be very useful, but it makes a good guide.

THE WONDERFUL STORY OF MUSIC. By Ellen Friel Baker. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. \$2.50.

YOUNG MASTERS OF MUSIC. By Mary Newlin Roberts. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. \$2.50.

Both of these books are addressed primarily to children. Mrs. Baker's volume, which is written in the form of conversations between a woman who is a musician and her nephew and niece, concludes with a chapter on recorded music, but it has nothing new to say on the subject. Carle M. Boog contributes twenty-three illustrations. Mrs. Roberts, in her book, deals with incidents in the early years of some twenty-one famous musicians. There are eight illustrations in color by Rowland Wheelwright.

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